

THE SMART SET

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CONTENTS

The Carlyles	Mrs. Burton Harrison	1
A Summer's Night	Ethel Watts Mumford	84
The Butterfly of Dreams	Richard Le Gallienne	85
Carita	Hilton R. Greer	91
A Matter of Hats	Henry Sydnor Harrison	93
With a Little French Flower	Grace Walcott Hazard	102
An Afternoon Call	May Isabel Fisk	103
A Florida Tulip	Frank Dempster Sherman	106
The Higher Life	Emery Pottle	107
The Violet	Arthur Stringer	119
Waiting for the Train	Tudor Jenks	120
The Infernal Feminine	Maurice Francis Egan	121
Rain and Sun	Charles Buxton Going	126
The Tale of a Studio	Ethel M. Kelley	127
We Save Evelina May	Elizabeth Jordan	131
Fair Lady Mine	Harold Melbourne	137
At the Little Gate	Mildred I. McNeal	138
The Good Man	Edna Kenton	139
Love in Silence	Duncan Campbell Scott	148
La Mort du Chien	Octave Mirbeau	149
The Dance	Zona Gale	153
When Golden-Sandaled Summer Comes	Carrie E. Rewey	160

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"THE SMART SET" FOR SEPTEMBER

In the September "SMART SET" will appear a novelette which for wit, humorous characters and laughable situations is unexcelled even by the previous charming works of its author. It is entitled

"The Chateau of Montplasilr," By Molly Elliot Seawell

Thirteen short stories will also appear in this issue, among the authors being such well-known names as Elizabeth Duer, James L. Ford, James Huneker, Frederick Trevor Hill, Henry Sydnor Harrison and Stephen French Whitman. Kate Masterson contributes an essay.

Among the verse writers are Madison Cawein, Theodosia Garrison, Arthur Stringer, Wallace Irwin, Madeline Bridges, Virginia Woodward Cloud and R. K. Munkittrick.

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THE CARLYLES

By Mrs. Burton Harrison

MONIMIA—so named from an Otway play—aged seventeen, wearing a shabby white cambric frock that threatened to fall apart through frequent washings, with a heaven of new hope in her heart because the world was so beautiful and she had slept so well, ran down the stairs of an old house in Richmond on a certain Sunday morning in April.

She found no one in the dining-room, opening upon a brick-walled garden full of blooming flowers. The mahogany furniture, frowning in shadow or twinkling in sunlight; the walls covered with dim portraits in oil and St. Memim prints of people who rather bored her because, in her father's estimation, no one ever seemed of consequence who had not worn a long busk or a tie-wig; the table set for two with china, silver and damask that knew not stain or speck—all received a passing glance. Everything was in the order exacted by her fastidious sire. A glance at the clock showed her that it would be a few moments before he would be down. She improved them by running out into the garden.

The sun was already high, and the shade of a great magnolia tree flaunting its luscious blossoms far overhead was grateful. The sky was deeply blue; no sound came to her ears save the call of a distant church bell, and the footsteps of children trooping to Sunday-school along the brick pavement outside the ivied wall that shut in their domain.

Stooping to pick a Cape-jasmine, and adding to it a bit of crape-myrtle from the shrub beyond, she felt a fresh wave of hope and confidence surge in

her breast. It could not be what some visiting oldster had said to her father the night before, that things looked darker than ever for their Confederacy, the object of so many hopes and prayers from the best people she knew. The four terrible years in which her youth had budded could not be coming to such an end!

As she turned back into the breakfast-room she drew a long breath of relief from care. Things must come out right. The sacred cause would triumph; her poor mother lying so ill upstairs would soon recover; the price of butter, prohibitive just now at twenty-five dollars a pound, must fall; she and the cook and Britannicus, the butler, must, between them, be able to contrive some dish to tempt her father's appetite and satisfy their own.

"Monimia, I am waiting," called her father in his dry, croaking tones.

"Coming, papa."

She ran quickly in. He was already seated at his place.

"How is she? She was so still when I came by her door I didn't dare go in."

"Old Clarissa reports your mother to have passed a fairly good night," answered Mr. Carlyle, in the slightly irritated tone of a well man who cannot pardon liberties taken by Mors or Morbus with his family.

"The doctor says one or two days of absolute quiet may carry her past the worst," answered Mona, with a sigh.

"Doctors, my dear, since Molière's time, have not lost their adaptability to what their patients expect of them. They cut as they like the stuff upon

which they are at work. Your mother was always——"

Mona interrupted him, keeping down the tremor in her voice.

"Here's your coffee, sir. I'm sorry there's not a grain of sugar left."

"Coffee! Burned cornmeal and beans, rather," he grumbled. "Though it's a marvel how clear that woman manages to make her poor decoction. I taught her myself the fine art of coffee-making when I returned from Vienna in '56. What the devil's this, Britannicus?" he added, turning to survey the silver dish with a dome cover, engraved with the family arms, held at his elbow.

"Please, Marse, it's only the bacon fat, same as usual. I thought 'twould give it a kind of flavor if I polished up your grandestor's old cover with the family cress, to put over it. An', please, Marse, it's sizzlin' hot."

Guiltily conscious that his manoeuvre was in reality intended to conceal the minute supply of exuded essence of the too familiar pork, he whipped off the lustrous barrier. Mr. Carlyle helped himself with a shrug. A batch of Phoebe's celebrated corn-dodgers, yclept by their maker "scratch-backs," followed. Thus began and ended the Carlyles' customary matin meal. It was varied at dinner by boiled pork and a so-called "pudding" of Indian meal and sorghum molasses. On Sundays there were dried apples in the pudding.

Exquisite art, indeed, did old Phoebe bring to her variants of the eternal theme of bacon, molasses and cornmeal, but the soul of Alexius Carlyle, dilettante, scholar and gourmet, had begun to sicken at their repetition.

Mona, like the healthy child she was, cared only not to feel so hungry that she had to think about it. And that was often the case now. She saw today, with a natural pang, that not only was the bacon fat limited in quantity, but that the pile of corn-dodgers nestling under a damask napkin was perceptibly smaller than was common. Britannicus, perceiving her emotion from behind his master's

chair, telegraphed her to be of good cheer, and upon his next trip from the pantry presented to her a single boiled egg, Mr. Carlyle, while eating, being buried in a book.

"But mama?" whispered Mona, although her eyes sparkled with eager anticipation.

"Never you fear, honey. Dis here aig's just goin' beggin'," was the triumphant answer.

Mr. Carlyle happened to look up.

"What have you there, Britannicus? Eggs? This, indeed, is a pleasant surprise. The *œuf à la coque*, the bulwark of the Englishman's breakfast on the Continent. It is long since Phoebe has sent us any in. I think I shall relish one most heartily."

Britannicus, dolefully anticipating the sequel of the episode, retired into his pantry, leaving Mona to spring to her feet and carry the egg around to her father's end of the table. Retreating behind her breastworks of urn and sugar bowl, coffee-pot and cream jug of fluted Colonial silver, she then pretended to be enjoying her share of the treat.

"Delicious," said Mr. Carlyle lingeringly as he scraped out the last contents of the shell. "I could wish for a morsel of wheat bread, or toast, to go with it, although the negro cook is never strong on toast."

"Flour has gone up to fifteen hundred dollars a barrel, dear," said Mona gently, then gathered her courage to observe, "I'm afraid we'll need meal and bacon, too, by tomorrow, so if you can manage to let me have a little money by then——"

"Money!" said Mr. Carlyle bitterly. "Your mother, at any rate, was a good manager. I should think you and Phoebe, between you, might contrive something."

"I'm so sorry, papa," persisted Mona, smiling, though her eyes were filling. "Will you go to church with me, sir? It is almost time."

Before they left the house Mona glided like a shadow to the landing outside her mother's door and listened. No sound came from within, but mental

telepathy brought to her rencounter a strong-visaged, clean mulatto woman, who, coming out noiselessly, gave the girl a benignant smile ill concealing her own anxiety.

"Mammy, she's no worse?" asked Mona breathlessly.

"I think not, honey."

"If you would only let me help——"

"No, no, honey, leave her to me and the doctor. He has hopes, strong hopes, that if we can tide her over two days more her mind will be cleared again."

"Of course, papa doesn't know the truth?"

"No, child; the doctor thought it wa'n't best to disturb old Marse. It's the strain, the long strain, that's tellin' on my pore miss, and her mournin' in secret for the boy that's been gone this three years to his grave."

"Oh, I know, I know, and I who can laugh and be happy still! How cruel of me!"

"My lamb, it's nature in your veins. For the Lord's sake, keep cheerful."

But it was a very sober young person who rejoined her father in the hall. He was nattily equipped, wearing a white duck waistcoat and trousers strapped under high-heeled shoes, and a venerable blue body-coat and panama hat, both brushed and pressed by Britannicus in fear of instant collapse from age. Mona smiled again as she stuck in his buttonhole a sprig of mignonette and handed him a stick; the worn smartness of the old dandy never failed to fill her soul with pride.

Then they passed together down the queer, three-sided marble steps with green things growing between the chinks, into the sun-checked shade made by the horse-chestnut trees along the brick pavement.

Three years before their family had been, after the Southern custom, sitting upon those steps in the hot dusk of a summer's night, fanning themselves and thrilling at the news brought by every passer-by of the battle that, all day long, had raged along the lines outside the town. And just before

midnight a gun carriage, escorted by two dusty artillerymen, had pulled up at their door, and across it lay the body of Mr. Carlyle's only son, the pride and idol of the parents.

Killed in battle! An episode of every day, a tragedy of more families than they could count around them.

Mona kept step with her father, regaling him with some droll saying of old Phoebe, some anecdote of the convalescent ward of the hospital she visited, some merry, girlish thought of her own devising. Soon the light came back to her eyes, the spring to her feet. When old Alexius looked sidewise at her out of his study-worn eyes, it was to think with satisfaction that she would soon be of marriageable age; and that when this infernal war ended, as it must, in the victory of Southern arms, she would fulfil his lifelong hope and make a splendid bride to the last of his line save himself, his cousin's son, young Lancelot Carlyle, the head of their house, now a lieutenant-colonel down Petersburg way with Lee.

The minx was, no doubt, secretly in love with handsome Lance, though she pretended not to show it. She would take her place among the ladies of the Carlyle race as the chatelaine of Lance's home, Carlyle Hall in Goochland, up the James. The boy needed money to carry on such a big estate. Well, Alexius had laid aside enough to keep the wolf from the young people's door. After they were married he would take his own deplorably hipped wife and rouse her up by a trip to Europe!

Nearing the centre of things it became apparent that some hidden excitement lay under the sabbath calm. The friends they met bowed and passed on, seeming not to wish to discuss the usual all-absorbing topic of the army and its doings. People hurried ahead with evasive looks.

In old St. Paul's a sense of peace recurred to the congregation when they saw, sitting quietly in his pew, the Chief Executive of their hard-

pressed nation. That the President should look pale, grave, absorbed, was nothing new to those daily familiar with his face. He was apparently serene and still master of his fate.

As the service progressed a messenger strode up the aisle, presenting a note to the President, which he read, immediately rising to leave the church. Accustomed as were the assemblages in this place to swift calls to leaders, to the alarm bells summoning soldiers to posts of duty, to men springing to arms from bridal or from funeral—there was something in this act, at this juncture, like the clutch of death on a warm heart. A stir ensued—a noiseless tremor—the repressed movement of awestricken hundreds, uncertain where to turn. The rector, advancing to the altar rail, spoke a few of his habitually vigorous and fervent words of remonstrance against alarm. His insistence and manly faith prevailed. While some nervous ones followed the President outside, most worshipers remained reverently tranquil in their seats. When the benediction was pronounced and the people issued again into the spring sunshine of a perfect day, they found need for all Christian courage, since it was to hear that the dreaded blow had fallen. The note received by the President was the telegram from General Lee announcing that he could hold Petersburg no longer. Already the evacuation of Richmond had begun.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon the formal announcement was made to the public that the Government would leave Richmond that evening. By nightfall all the flitting shadows of the Lost Cause had passed under a heaven studded by millions of bright stars. Farewells like those spoken to the dying palpitated in the air; and then came silence, dread and dreary. The sleepless city lay face to face—with what?

Except that her father's face had grown singularly grave and pinched, Mona could not discern in him any indication of accepting the universal belief in their downfall. In his way

Alexius Carlyle had done as much for the Confederacy, suffered as much, complained as little, as most of their friends around them. But few people credited the sharp, subacid, finical gentleman with the hot fire of partisanship that ran in his veins; still less with the stubborn hope against hope that had sustained and made him feel secure of the fortune he had invested in Confederate bonds. When they now reached home he presented his hat and stick as usual to Britannicus, and then passed grimly into the library, shutting himself in. Mona, in her breathless emotion, turned to the old butler.

"Britannicus, you've heard?"

"Yes, Miss Mona," he said unwillingly.

"You believe it's true?"

"Yes, miss, 'pears like it is, for sure."

"Isn't it too dreadful?" she gasped.

Britannicus, who, with his wife Phoebe, had just been discussing the subject from the colored people's point of view in the kitchen, was hard put to it, between the rich flow of sympathy within him for his master and the brand-new tremor of exultation on his own account. His voice was soft and infinitely gentle as he answered her.

"Don't look like that, miss. Think of your pa and ma, that never needed you like they need you now."

"Think of Harry having died in vain!"

"Little miss, it's the livin' we've got to work for. Let alone your pa and ma, there's another gentleman as wants your care today. Sence you've been gone to church we've had a visitor—a soldier on horseback, straight from the front."

"Not Lance?" she cried joyously.

"Marse Lance, sure enough, and they done sent him up to town with a despatch for the President. He's rid hard all night, and left word as how he'll stop in here ag'in on his way back for a bite of snack."

"Oh! I wouldn't have missed Lance for anything!" she exclaimed. "But what's wrong with him?" she added quickly, reading the negro's fallen countenance.

"Wid him? Nothing, honey, bless the Lawd. Marse Lance is just his reg'lar self, let alone lookin' a little thin. Honey, do you know these young fellers in de army has been livin' on parched corn and tree shoots this past week?"

"Poor dears—what can we get for Lance?"

"We's done touched bottom, Miss Mona. They ain't a thing left to cook wid."

"There must be," Mona said.

"Oh, my child, ain't me and Phoebe been on our knees a-prayin' the good Lawd would send us a little morsel for you and Marse this day? We'll have to come to it, Miss Mona. We'll have to borrow or beg. We can't let Marse want food, an' Marse Lance ride back hungry to the camp."

As Mona was making up her reluctant mind to send Britannicus forth upon an errand of appeal to neighbors as needy as themselves, strange sounds were heard in the yard by the servants' quarters. There was a rush, a scuffle, a squawk of some feathered creature in dire emergency, an interposing movement of authority, the loud mewing of a remonstrant cat, and then old Phoebe dashed in at the rear door of the hall, a luminous joy shining upon her countenance, black as the ace of spades—in her hand a fowl that had just given up the ghost.

Almost inarticulate with joy, she explained that her fireside cat, off on some predatory excursion, had just returned from parts unknown, bearing this trophy. She thanked God who had thus answered her prayer; she spoke over her shoulder words of comfort to the cat, promising him his full share of the titbit; and then, for fear Miss Mona's tender conscience might interpose inconvenient questions as to their legal right to the booty, fairly turned tail and ran to denude it of its feathers.

Britannicus, equally overjoyed, followed his wife to their quarters. He was encouraged to further effort. The lifelong sense of fealty to the family whose chattel he was born denounced

the long-cherished hoarding of secluded treasure. Climbing up to the loft in which he and Phoebe slept, he took out of his chest his very dearest possession, a flowered purple and gold-flecked waistcoat of damask, once given to him by his master and long sported on Sundays and on his walks abroad. For many months Solon Taliaferro, a skin-flint deacon of his church, believed to have laid up stores of sugar and coffee, meal and bacon, had been making him offers, on an ascending scale, for this admired garment. It was like pulling an eyetooth to part with it; but, rolling it in a bandanna handkerchief, Britannicus slipped down the stairs and disappeared, unseen by Phoebe at the moment that lady's broad beam was presented as she stooped over a saucepan bubbling with the handful of black beans that, till the advent of the fowl, had constituted her sole reliance for their midday meal. With beans and fried chicken as she knew how to prepare them, old Marse and Marse Lance would dine like "befo' de wah!"

Let Marse Lincoln's blue boys come in and set her free if they liked, Phoebe would never know a more exultant pride than this! Britannicus, returning without the waistcoat and plus a bag of meal, a slab of bacon and six sweet potatoes, rebuked her smartly for making a noise that might reach ole Marse in the library.

II

COLONEL LANCELOT CARLYLE, his high mission in places accomplished, came galloping up the shady street and drew rein at his cousin's door. Dismounting and sending away his tired charger, Lance ran up the pyramidal steps he could never see without a quickening of boyish memories. His spurs rang cheerily in Mona's ears as she appeared to open the door for him.

He was a handsome, slender fellow, with a clear brown skin, mantled with peach bloom, like a girl's, fearless brown eyes, and hair of an amber

tinge; a soft, slow voice and a smile ever ready to answer provocation. Going into service as a marker in a regiment largely made up of friends and relatives, he had quickly risen from grade to grade; had been in almost continual action since the war began, and had shaved the narrow edge of Death, as by a miracle, in a hundred daring exploits. The old gray uniform he wore was faded and stained and torn, his boots were not mates, his gold lace and insignia were threadbare, but he sported them all jauntily and with complete indifference to deficiencies. Hardship, hard fighting and starvation had begun to set their seal upon his bright young manhood. He was thin as a greyhound, worn for want of food and sleep in the struggle to keep body and soul together to do fit duty in the field. But the spirit within him burned still so high and clear that even the disastrous tidings of which he had been the bearer from his chief did not yet spell to him the word defeat. In two words, Lance Carlyle was a fair sample of the soldiers of General Lee's army in the last days before Appomattox.

To Monimia, whose friend, brother, counselor and playmate he had ever been, the young Confederate colonel was just now the most inspiring apparition of which she could conceive.

"Lance! Lance!" she cried brokenly, "tell me the truth. Is this really the end?"

"Why, little cousin, who ever saw you with such a face? Give me the welcome and the heartening I've always had from you before I go back to fight in the last ditch."

"Oh, how selfish I am not to think of your greater troubles!"

"That's all right, Mona. We manage to be jolly enough."

"Don't I remember that day when I was walking down Franklin and met the general, and he stopped his horse by the curbstone and made me step up on his foot to kiss him, the way I often have? How he said, 'Keep

bright, my little girl, keep always bright. It's that we soldiers need above all things.'"

"Don't you think it's your patriotic duty to give me the same kind of encouragement you bestowed upon the general?" asked Lance, with twinkling eyes.

She had ever been chary of caresses lightly given or taken, but today gravely lifted her lips to his.

"We mustn't stop here," she said nervously. "I want you to help me to make papa let us into the library. Oh, Lance, he's been shut up there so long. You are the only one who can do him good."

It was a changed and pitiful man who, upon Lancelot's solicitation, opened the door of his sanctum to admit the young people. Over the yellow of the old man's skin had come a gray pallor, and his eyes were caverns of sorrow and disappointment. He grasped his kinsman's hand but could not speak.

"Why, Cousin Alexius," exclaimed the young fellow heartily, "aren't you taking it too hard? Don't you think there's hope yet?"

"I fear not, my boy. I believe we've got our death-blow. But that's not talk for you, with despatches in your breast-pocket to carry back to where men can still fight before they surrender. For me, I must just go under in the crash. I'm old and spent. I've given my son; I've given pretty much every dollar I own, and beggared this poor child and the wife upstairs. I'm done, I tell you."

His quavering voice broke; there were tears in his eyes. Never had either of them seen such feeling in the tough old sybarite. He walked away down the length of the dim, matted room, with its walls golden and red and dead-leaf color, with row after row of books, its pallid busts, its tables heaped with papers and globes and reading-lamps. Pausing at a far window, upon whose panes unpruned ivy tapped, he stood in the oblong of greenish light the sun cast through it, his back bent, his head

drooped, a monument of despondency.

"It is very sad, cousin," said Lance gently, "but at least we all fare alike. If the war ends tomorrow and I have my barren acres and that big barrack of the Hall on my hands, I sha'n't know what to do with them. I sometimes think my best chance will be Foxcroft, the farm Cousin Julian left me last year. I haven't seen it since I was a boy, and, as it's in the debatable land, I'm not likely to get there soon. But the land was pretty good."

"Good Lord, man, don't talk of small farms; it's your duty to keep up the Hall as your father would have kept it. You'll be the only one of us, with Harry dead. We mustn't go out of our line." His voice quavered.

"You have no son and I no father. We'll keep together, Cousin Alexius," the young man said. "And never forget that if I live and Mona wants me there'll be two to look out for you and Cousin Grace."

Alexius nodded, brightening.

"Of course, I think of that; it's my dearest hope. Mona knows——"

"It wasn't to be till I'm eighteen, father," cried the girl, "and that's a whole year off."

"But you're pledged, you're pledged," said the old man querulously.

"Let me have my say, cousin," interposed the soldier. "I won't let Mona feel herself coerced——"

"Mona knows I am the one to decide for her; she understands why I want the assurance that you will have the right to care for her future," answered Mona's father.

"Mona, will you give me that right?" said Lancelot with solemnity. "Will you promise that as soon as I may claim you you will take me for your husband? Don't be frightened, dear; don't tremble so. I know I'm not much of a fellow—only a played-out Johnny Reb—and you could probably do much better. But you can trust me; don't you know you can, little girl? And that's a pretty big thing, isn't it?"

Mona, who had as yet admitted no

outsider into the virgin stronghold of her heart, yet who, like any other Southern girl of her age and date, had built many an air castle enshrining the real lover, was greatly overcome. She had, indeed, promised her father that when she was eighteen she would consider taking her Cousin Lancelot in marriage; but then eighteen had seemed as far off as the judgment day. She knew that this was her father's darling wish; she believed in Lancelot and had seen no one whom she preferred to him, but—to be engaged now! A wave of resistance swept over her. She could not force her feelings to twine sentimentally around any object. She was all for patriotism, for fiery action, for nerving and inspiring the actors in a great national drama, and had no mind for stopping to dally with love-talk by the way. If Lance had been a particle less kind and grave and gentle than he was, if his eye had questioned hers less openly, she felt that she must have cried out "No!" with all her might.

"Monimia, my dear child," said Mr. Carlyle, with unwonted softness, "if I did not know that this is for your happiness I would not urge it."

"Is it for your happiness, father?"

"The best I can ever hope to know in this weary world," cried old Alexius pathetically.

There was a moment of silence.

"Is it yes, Mona?"

"It is yes, Lance," she answered, drawing back as if fearing he would touch her.

"God bless you, Monimia," said her father. "You have lifted a weight from me, child, and I believe it will make your mother try to get well. Perhaps I should go to her now," and he made a movement to leave the room.

"No, no, father, don't go now. She has just fallen into her best sleep to-day," cried the girl, hastening over to his side and slipping her hand under his arm. "Besides, they have got luncheon ready for Lance, and it will spoil if it's kept waiting."

"I think not," remarked Alexius, with a touch of his old sardonic hu-

mor. "My dear Lance and Mona, this will be a poor betrothal feast for you. But Lance shall have a bottle of my old Madeira that I bade Britannicus fetch down from the garret. 'Bottled sunshine,' Mr. Thackeray called it when he did me the honor to sup with us. Not much of it left, I fear, but we may as well drink it now as let the Yanks get it tomorrow."

He led the way into the dining-room. Whatever Mona's tendency to cry had previously been, her sense of the ludicrous was now to be strongly aroused. There was Britannicus standing guard over a covered platter set at his master's place, his face puckered into a thousand twinkles of delight, his eyes goggling, all sense of conventional decorum thrown to the winds; even his ivories disclosing themselves in an ample, radiant grin. Behind him—unheard-of spectacle!—stood Phoebe the cook, her fat person swaying with glee, looking as if she would give the world to cut a pigeon-wing and be done with it.

For one moment their master surveyed the exultant pair. Then a dark frown of disgust and pain overspread Mr. Carlyle's countenance.

"Britannicus, are you drunk or mad?" he said haughtily. "And pray, what does that woman mean by her unseemly antics? Is it the coming of your friends, the Yankees, that has turned both your heads and made you forget your places?"

Phoebe had already fled like chaff before the wind. Britannicus straightened up, looking his master in the face.

"I could have hoped you knew me better, Marse," he said with noble dignity, then withdrew Mr. Carlyle's chair and placed him as usual at table; afterward doing the like service for the young people.

This little incident of harsh rebuke to old and tried servants before the family was so uncommon as to produce a painful pause among them. It was broken by the butler, who, with an inimitable turn of the wrist, uncovered the chief dish. There, upon mush cakes of golden brown, reposed old-time chicken

fried *à la* Carlyle Manor; there, opposite, were bacon and beans *à la* Creole, and at the sides the hot corn-pone of Virginia, and sweet potatoes in Savannah style!

"Britannicus," said his master, "I am surprised—touched—ashamed of myself. I—beg your pardon, boy."

Britannicus knew his place far too well to answer. He only bowed and bowed again.

"And when you have taken the cork out of that bottle," added Mr. Carlyle with perfect courtesy, "go out and tell Phoebe I beg her pardon, too."

For a little space of time, while knives and forks flew, and they pledged each other in golden sips of priceless old Madeira, the Carlyles managed to preserve a seeming cheerfulness. But even the nondescript sweet dish Phoebe had further evolved, and her cups of black "coffee"—unrelated to the Mocha and Java bean of commerce—could not prolong the hour of family reunion.

With a glance at the clock Lance sprang to his feet, took quick leave of his kinsman, and shook Mona's hand, declaring he had not a moment more to call his own.

The clatter of horses' hoofs was heard simultaneously in the street. His cousins went out with him to the pavement, as was the custom of the town. The old gentleman affectionately clasped his shoulders as they walked.

"And, my boy, I think I should tell you that, even if tomorrow finds Confederate money valued no more than the dust of the street, I've got a few damned Yankee securities locked away down yonder in the bank on Main street that may serve to set you up in stock for the Goochland plantation. They'll be all poor Mona's wedding portion, though——"

"All right, sir, but don't give up the ship yet. Trust Uncle Robert's boys to do their best for you."

Alexius Carlyle wrung the soldier's hand silently. He could not bear to say the words of dole that rose involuntarily to his lips. He fell back, leaving Mona in her washed and darned white

frock over the gracious curves of a full young form—Mona with her dark, brilliant eyes and vivid rosy lips—close to the young man's bridle rein.

More and more Lance felt her a sweetheart the winning of whom was a glorious feather in his cap. He had meant to part with her conventionally, calmly, but instead, quite indifferent to the presence of the orderly, threw his strong arms around Mona, held her to his quick, beating heart, and kissed her with a lover's kiss. Then vaulting into the saddle of his war horse, with a clank of metal and a last wave of his dreadful old powder-stained hat, spurred away under the bowery spring foliage of the street, leaving her trembling, crying and redder than any rose in her garden.

All that day there were partings, and by evening the city was emptied of the chief part of what had made it the Capital of the Confederacy. Over the doomed bridges spanning the chafing river, the voice of whose rapids is never still, passed the Government and its principal servants, followed by a myriad of clerks, mechanics and motley refugees. The Libby Prison was emptied, its occupants sent under the flag of truce into Federal lines. The citizens who were left in town threw themselves in sick uncertainty upon beds, not to be visited by sleep, or else kept vigil behind the closed shutters and locked and bolted doors of their desolated homes.

So lay Richmond at the mercy of her foe. And when the stars of the soft night paled, and the pink dawn of another day was breaking, were heard the long, sullen, horrible explosions of the gunboats on the James, fired to keep them from falling into Union hands. It was the beginning of the carnival of fire of April 3 that was to rage and roar till nightfall; that strained the nerves and wrecked the homes and fortunes of hundreds of innocent sufferers, who might otherwise have started life anew and been saved years of grinding poverty on top of years of grinding war, without loss of prestige to the retreating government and threatened army.

With the first thunder-roll Mona's mother awoke, giving signs of keen excitement. The nurse called Mr. Carlyle, to whom now was broken the fear they had kept from him. Once at her bedside, the invalid would not suffer him to leave it. Old Clarissa, with fear-stricken eyes, shut herself in with the married pair, bidding Mona pray that no sudden noise or alarm should come near the house.

Mona, calm and pale, gathered around her the butler, cook, housemaid and laundress in the lower hall. Through the side lights of the front door they saw a detachment of cavalry in blue ride by. Mona trembled like a leaf, and whatever the colored people felt, they stood in sympathetic silence.

Britannicus, fully informed of current events, now told Mona that, although the occupation had been effected quietly, many citizens were going to apply for guards for the protection of private houses, and urged that she should go with him to the headquarters of the commanding general to secure this provision of safety for her mother.

Mona hesitated, a bitter taste in her mouth, her cheeks flushing hotly. At that moment began a new terror; the thunderous fusillade of bursting shells in armory, arsenal and laboratory, that was to make this a *Dies Irae* in grim truth.

She ran upstairs, followed by the old man, to ask her father's consent. Mr. Carlyle, coming out to them for a moment, looked like a dazed ghost—hardly seeming to understand the force of his child's appeal, and hurried back distractedly in answer to a piteous wail from within.

Mona put her hand across her eyes and thought. Then, bidding Britannicus follow, she took hat and parasol and resolutely stepped out into the surge of the under-world that in time of stress a city brings suddenly to the surface of its streets. The panic of the fire, the hideous noise and sudden ominous blackening of the sky seemed to have rid the baser portion of Rich-

mond society of all belief in the necessity of self-control and law.

A report gained ground that the penitentiary had loosed its inmates, who were said to be at large, ravaging where they might. This may have accounted for the mob of looters, black and white, men and women, that, dashing by Mona and her escort, carried a strange burden of coffins rifled from an undertaker's shop, and piled high with stolen groceries, rolls of silk and stuff, boots, shoes, hats and clothing.

Mona swerved aside from contact with the participants in this revolting semblance of the procession at a lengthened funeral, but came to no harm. Amid the turmoil were seen many sober citizens, mostly aged men, anxious women and non-combatants, drawn into the streets by a feverish desire to know their fate. To all appearance, however, the only fear abroad was that of fire. The verdant inclosure of the Capitol Square, the focus of Richmond war life, was the point to which all steps converged.

Every man's thoughts and gaze were centered upon the terrible spectacle to the south of it. Behind and below the classic, white-pillared Capitol spouted jets of flame stretching to the zenith as if from a mighty caldron; waves of blinding heat and swirls of acrid smoke drifted across the square, sullyng and crisping the April-green of the trees, to which were hitched troop horses stamping the young grass out of life. Soldiers kept watch over heaps of goods and valuables rescued from the burning buildings.

Not trusting herself to look right or left, Mona threaded the crowds around the entrance of the City Hall. Many a group of newly arrived soldiers gave way silently before the pale and self-contained young girl and the respectable old negro who guarded her as the apple of his eye. There was no unkind curiosity in the looks they sent after her. This was a part of the other side of war these young Northerners had pictured and longed to see.

Upon the threshold of the City Hall Mona's hand was grasped by an official of the banking company in which her father's interests were invested.

"You here, my child? I trust your father— Mona, we need all our pluck today. I've been to ask help to save our building down yonder. It's caught, and they're doing all they can, but I'm afraid we're done for utterly."

He was gone, and Mona went on, a new shiver running through her veins. Ruined! Her father's last hope gone in the general holocaust! But then, what was he, or she, amid so many stricken ones? The immediate thing was to be calm and brave, and Mona felt something in her blood rise up to insure her against forgetting this. She trembled a little at finding herself in the crowded corridors of the building where the headquarters of the Union general in command of the troops doing provost or guard duty had been hastily established. Old Britannicus gave her an encouraging glance as he stepped ahead to hold open a heavy swing-door, watching her pass through it as if she had been a little queen on her way to execution.

III

EARLY that Monday morning the First Brigade (Devens's Division), Twenty-fourth Army Corps, Army of the James, which had been lying in the trenches at the point where the Union works approached nearest to the city and were the triumphant first to cross the forsaken Confederate works, had led the column in the formal entry, and marched up Main street under command of Brevet Brigadier-General Ripley. Near the Old Market they turned into Broad street, and, to the music of four regimental bands played gallantly—music that carried despair into still dwellings of a dead city like Pompeii, wherein were huddled old men, women and children turned to stone—proceeded in fine style to the City Hall, where they reported to Major-General Weitzel, commanding

the troops operating on the north side of the James, who had previously entered with a small headquarters force.

At 8 A.M. the Stars and Bars had been hauled down from the flagstaff above the Capitol and the Stars and Stripes run up. What this meant to captors and captured was at once lost to sight in the immediate terror of the great fire. General Weitzel had taken up his position on the platform of the high steps at the east front of the Capitol building, and there, looking down into a gigantic crater, suffocated and blinded with the vast volumes of smoke and cinders which rolled down and enveloped the place, he assigned the apparently hopeless task of stopping the conflagration and suppressing the mob of Confederate stragglers, released criminals and negroes who had far advanced in pillaging the city on their arrival. His orders were to strain every nerve to save the city, crowded with women and children, and the sick and wounded of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Among Ripley's brigade were many veteran firemen of Brooklyn, Hartford and New Haven, who were promptly set to their old business, and did it cheerfully and well. Into that sea of fire plunged the brave fellows, as if fighting for their own homes.

Among the more or less dissatisfied boys of Uncle Sam not detailed for fire duty was Private Donald Lyndsay, of the — Volunteers. He was, although he didn't often let it come to the surface, "the ideal soldier, who thinks for himself."

Lyndsay was a tall, lean young man, with reddish hair, a frank countenance and a pair of singularly bright blue eyes. Born in New England, of a Scotch father, he had lived of late years under the thumb of his mother's brother, a peculiarly disagreeable mill-owner, who had no idea how to spend the money he had amassed, and no patience with any young man who desired more than three meals a day and a stool in his uncle's office.

Lyndsay, at the outbreak of the war,

had nearly broken his heart to enter the army. He had just graduated from college, and because he owed the college course to his uncle, had consented to go into the mill and work out the indebtedness. After three years of it he had left and proceeded to enlist. His sole regret now was that he had not done this sooner. In his regiment there was no man who knew him as a college graduate and the reputed heir of the richest old curmudgeon in the thriving manufacturing town of Airedale in the Berkshire Hills. Donald had sworn to himself to put all that business out of sight, and he did so. Now and again he would run up against old classmates at Yale who had won rank and honors in the army, and the thought that, but for his uncle's pig-headedness, his career might have been like unto theirs, would stick like a big and bitter pill in his throat.

Lyndsay had noticed the beautiful young girl with the proud, pale face and modest bearing pass by him, attended by the high-bred old negro slave, whose expression of concentrated loyalty to his mistress struck him as one of the finest things he had ever seen. He was not aware of the nature of their colloquy with his young general, who, much driven and beset by one or two hysterical old females, so far impelled by their panic as to pat him on the cheeks and cling to his knees, petitioning for salvation from his soldiers, had been relieved by the appearance of so self-controlled a petitioner as Miss Carlyle.

Private Lyndsay knew only that he got his orders to "go with this lady, find out what you can do for her, and do it," and that, two minutes later, he was in the wake of the pair who had so attracted him, threading his way through the turmoil of corridors, stairs and streets, until they turned into a nearby residential quarter of the town.

Mona had not at any time felt so like breaking down. She understood why the wife of General Lester found it so much harder to receive than to give. The prompt courtesy of her reception by the "enemy" had seemed

overpowering. Now that the dreaded ordeal was over, her pride bled so distressingly at having been among the first to ask for protection, she would have enjoyed bursting into hearty tears. Until they passed out of the worst of the confusion she decided she would not trust herself to look this Yankee soldier in the face. Then a better instinct came to her.

They were walking single file, Britannicus behind Miss Carlyle, Private Lyndsay behind Britannicus. Not a word had been spoken, when the girl suddenly wheeled and addressed herself to their guard.

"I am sorry to give you this trouble," she said, with a little royal nod, in the softest voice he had ever heard. "But for a serious illness in our house I should never have considered it necessary or desirable. I hope it will not be for long."

Private Lyndsay bowed, snatching off his cap; then, clapping it on again, saluted gravely. Evidently she did not expect him to answer her. But he instinctively recognized that her reserve had nothing whatever to do with his modest grade in the United States service.

When her straightforward eyes met his she had read something in them that gave her unlooked-for confidence. But all the same, she knew that it was not for a vanquished Confederate girl to be tripping up the street of her captured city, past the silent shuttered houses, in conversation with a captor. She allowed him again to fall behind, and thus the odd little procession accomplished its route without incident, and soon brought up at the door of the Colonial house.

To Lyndsay the outcome of his unique mission now became supremely interesting. When he faced the old brick dwelling matted with ivy, flanked on both sides by a garden containing tall magnolias that eloquently breathed of the sweet South; when he caught sight of the fanlight and quaint sidelights of the portal, the odd steps leading up to it, the brasses of door-knob and knocker, the decent old chocolate

mammy, with tears on the furrowed cheeks between her gold hoop-earrings, who bobbed low as she opened to them, he knew here was the "real thing" he had wished to see.

In the hall with the little band of scared dark people gathered at the far end, his eye was caught by dark wainscoting, with glimmering high lights; by Italian wall-paper representing vine-clad hills, castles, flowery pergolas and volcanic mountains; by stairs going up on either side to meet in the centre in a white-railed gallery; by a lovely old swinging chandelier for oil lamps, with domes of French crystal; by Chinese bowls of dried rose-leaves set about on quaint tables—and, best of all, by a wide door at the rear opening upon the intense radiance of an old-time garden bathed in sun!

Here was a rare glimpse for him of a home of Southern gentry. Private Lyndsay, possessing much imagination and an eager worship of beauty, having been for days on the blind march in miserable weather until he had forgotten there was such a thing as a softer side of life, naturally felt himself in clover. Something about it brought to his mind the refined idealist, his mother, who had trained him in childhood to a love of nicety and a proper estimate of home. He forgot how sleepy a hungry man may be and yet keep afoot and doing; he looked about him, his lips parted, his eyes taking in with appreciation all the nice and delicate details.

The young lady, who had run upstairs, now reappeared with her father, a stately, saffron-faced gentleman with sardonic lips and weary black eyes. Addressing the newcomer without waste of words, but civilly, Mr. Carlyle regretted the necessity of summoning a soldier to their house; begging that Lyndsay would make himself comfortable with the limited means at his disposal, and, after waving his hand to Britannicus, with the injunction to "provide this—er—gentleman with—er—refreshments," he withdrew as he had come.

Private Lyndsay had much ado to

repress a smile, so greatly did Mr. Carlyle's shrinking away from him while speaking confer upon the old man's movements a resemblance to the locomotion of a crab. But it did not amuse him that even the servants, relieved though they were by his presence, seemed to hold back from it.

"Our butler will do all you ask of him," Mona said. "Perhaps you will know best what is usual in these cases."

"Oh, I don't want anything," observed Lyndsay, piqued at finding himself a kind of genteel Pariah. "If you prefer it, I'll go out to the front and wait till they send to relieve me."

"Surely that is not necessary. It is much cooler inside, and you can rest. Sit down, and, if you like books——"

"Yes, I like books," he answered brusquely.

"—my father's library is at your service," she went on.

"That's all right. I'll take care of myself well enough."

Mona was insensibly disappointed. This drop into casual familiarity made her feel that she had gone too far.

"Then I will leave you," she said, with a stately movement that sat well, he thought, upon her fine, delicate face and frame. He repented of having so forgotten his manners while she kept hers. What could he have expected of her that he had not received? A dainty courtesy, a pathetic suggestion that even in the presence of a foe she could not forget the inbred desire to make him feel at ease under her roof. After all, what was he to Hecuba, or Hecuba to him?

When she had vanished up the darkly glowing stairs an immense pity for her suddenly assailed his honest young soul. The whole vast sorrow of the stricken South seemed to be embodied in her wide-opened hazel eyes, full of unshed tears. If the first rebel girl he had met was like this, what must they be in the aggregate?

At that moment Lyndsay became unpleasantly aware that his physical

sensations revealed the strain he had been under in the advance. He was very glad, indeed, to drop down in the nearest chair and ruminate upon the fact that in the general excitement no breakfast had come his way. The hint of the master of the house—queer old Dick that he was, that remained to his credit!—to his servant to supply "refreshment" to the guard left a musical echo in Donald's brain. The traditions of Southern cookery arose insidiously to woo his fancy. If ever a darky woman's looks did not belie her, the old person, like a scared rabbit, who had kept well in the rear, was a cordon of blue of the approved Southern pattern. In fancy the tit-bits resulting from her skill were already melting on his palate.

He was aroused from this day-dream by the butler offering him a salver containing a wineglass and a decanter of wine, together with a cut-glass tumbler of the amber water of the James. The man's face wore a look of acute mortification. It seemed as though he would like the earth to open and swallow him.

"I'm sorry not to carry out my master's orders better sir," he managed to stammer out. "But the fact is, this here's the only refreshmen' we have left."

Something in the man's dejected tone struck a chord of sympathy in Private Lyndsay's heart. He lost no time in making inquiries, and, to his dismay, ascertained that nobody in the house had tasted food that day. It was the work of a moment to write a note to his general, which he placed in the servant's reluctant hands. Britannicus had never gone forth to be whipped, but in carrying this missive he looked as if it contained an order for that chastisement.

Left to himself, Private Lyndsay, much perturbed and forgetting his own inner vacuum, walked up and down the hall, glancing in at the pictures on the drawing-room walls, until at last, tempted by their number and beauty, he stepped across the threshold and walked in to examine them.

He studied the portrait of a young, guileless maiden of perhaps sixteen.

"Ahem! My sister's portrait, by Chapman. You may see a replica of it in one of the figures in his 'Baptism of Pocahontas,' in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington," came in a croak behind him. Young Lyndsay turned, abashed, to be transfixed by a pair of small, piercing black eyes.

"I beg your pardon for intruding here," the soldier said, "but it is so long since I have been inside a home or seen a picture——"

Mr. Carlyle—thinking, with truth, that this was an unusual sort of a Yankee guard that had fallen to their lot—seemed determined to be suave. Had they met outside, on the pavement, he would not have looked twice at Private Lyndsay, but here the youth was sacred and must be made to feel at ease.

"No intrusion," the old gentleman said politely. "The portrait is of some value as a work of art, and besides——"

"It's the image of your daughter—I mean the young lady who brought me here," blundered Private Lyndsay, seeing at once that he was not expected to make comments upon living personalities, and ending by blushing at red heat.

"H'm," said old Alexius, moving away from the pictures across the matted hall into the mellow gloom of the library. "Would you mind coming this way?"

In spite of himself, Lyndsay's eyes sparkled at sight of the riches of matter and binding on those shelves. By nature an ardent bibliophile, he knew enough to see that the collection had not been made, but had gathered like dust during several successive generations. His fingers itched to hold and handle some of his oldest favorites. It had been one of the prime causes of grievance against him in his uncle's eyes that all the money Donald could ever rake and scrape went into books.

Old Alexius, who had preceded him, halted suddenly, drawing a short, quick breath and stretching out one hand to clutch at the table.

"You aren't well, sir?" asked the younger man.

"Perfectly well," was the haughty answer. But Mr. Carlyle slipped, nevertheless, into the nearest chair, looking pale and heavy-eyed. He passed his hand once or twice over his forehead and seemed uncertain.

"If you will be so good as to call my servant——" he began.

Here Private Lyndsay, not greatly accustomed to the sensation of fear, felt his knees knock together under him with apprehension at being found out in what he had sent Britannicus forth to do.

"I had a message to headquarters," he said at last, hesitating, "and I ventured to send your man with it. He should be back directly. In the meantime——"

"In the meantime I should prefer to be alone," said the elderly man sharply. But as he spoke he grew to be of a greenish-gray hue, and his voice waxed feeble.

Lyndsay, remembering the decanter of wine still standing on the salver in the hall, broke away across the slippery bare floor, and was back in a moment holding a glass of it to Mr. Carlyle's lips. While he stood ministering to the poor old broken-down rebel and outlaw against his country—as Lyndsay had, up till then, considered him—it flashed upon the soldier's mind that hunger and nervous overstrain were the cause of the collapse, which was, indeed, the case. And at this moment Mona stepped across the threshold, her face radiant, carrying in her hand a roll of white bread, the first she had seen for many a long month. It had been pressed upon her by Mammy Clarissa, who received it from a friend calling "to pass the time o' day," to which friend it had been presented by a relative participating in the recent loot of a baker's shop.

When Miss Carlyle perceived the stranger in the library, a slight frown gathered upon her brows. She had wanted to be alone to share her treasure with her parent. But Mr. Carlyle's drooping attitude, his pallid face and

half-closed eyes disarmed her wrath. Like a mother bird she flew to him, curled her warm young arm around his neck, forced the wine and bread between his teeth, said soothing words in his ear, bidding him take heart, as her mother was now at last really better.

Young Lyndsay, shamefaced at being witness to this little scene, backed from her presence rapidly, and, not knowing what else to do, walked down the hall and out behind into the open air. There he paused with an exclamation of delight. What a contrast between the pandemonium of the Richmond streets without and this Virginia house garden, steeped in green shade and golden light!

As Lyndsay gazed, fascinated, the blue sky above darkened ominously, while a column of fire-laden smoke came drifting in their direction. A burning mass of tarred roofing dropped at his feet, converting what had been a snowy pyramid of gardenias into blackened ruin. And, with that, the column began to broaden into a canopy.

Yes, the fire had turned their way! Hurrying back into the house, he espied Britannicus stealing on tiptoe toward the kitchen, his hands laden with paper bags, a large ham dangling from his arm.

"Here, give me some hard tack to nibble on," cried the soldier, feeling empty to his boots. "Then take the rest of the stuff to your wife and tell her to feed everybody, and be sure to help yourself, my man. Quick as you can, get all the blankets in the house, and show me the water tap that's nearest to the roof."

"Yes, suh, cert'nly, suh. The sky do seem awful dark, but the fire's a good ways off yet. Don' you think, Mr. Lyndsay—?"

"Look at what's just dropped yonder in the garden! Then do as I tell you."

For an hour they worked, covering the roof with wet blankets, saturating rugs to hang at the cracked windows of the invalid's chamber, into which choking gusts of smoke were beginning to find their way. The rain of fiery

particles was increasing in size and volume. The frightful explosions that had lulled began again with fury. Their neighbors were working like themselves. The roofs around were black with people looking at or fighting off the fire. Mona's spirit did not flag until a fresh crash of glass from her mother's windows, following an unusually loud explosion, was echoed by a piercing cry from the sufferer. The girl ran out and intercepted Lyndsay on the stairs.

"We must take her away—anywhere! I hate to trouble you, but if you could only help me I'd be forever thankful," she said despairingly. "We have a cousin who lives just out of town who would gladly receive her, but the question is how to her get there."

"I think I could get an ambulance detailed, but not immediately," he said, after reflection. "For the present, as the house is really in danger, would it not be well to put her on a cot that we could move downstairs and out into the far end of the grapevine walk, into that arbor where the vines grow thickest? There is but little smoke there and the spot is entirely sheltered."

She flashed at him a grateful glance. He had not suggested consulting Mr. Carlyle, whose weak and inert condition continued. The servants assisting, they carried the invalid outside, Mona holding her mother's hand and the mulatto nurse shielding the ghastly recumbent face with a large, old-time, green-fringed parasol. Lyndsay thought he had never beheld so strange and sad a pageant under the fire-flakes and amid the drifting smoke wreaths of the burning city.

There was work and enough of it yet for him in directing the servants and aiding them to carry out silver, pictures and piles of valuable books from the house into the stable-yard. Mona, herself working like a beaver, came upon him with his arms full of her aunt's portrait, which he proceeded to set down in a bed of lilies-of-the-valley, its face against the garden wall, with almost an apologetic air.

He was hot, smoky, perspiring, his blond skin reddened to the roots of his hair. Mona, intercepting him, lifted her dark orbs to his blue ones with unaffected friendliness.

"You know I can never thank you enough," she said, "but please let me begin."

"Don't thank me till I've succeeded in getting that ambulance. Now, if you've had something to eat——"

"I have, thank you. Broiled ham and real coffee. Britannicus is the most wonderful old fellow for foraging. He wouldn't tell me where he got such good things, but I suppose papa——"

She bit her lip. No need to communicate their worst need to their blue-coated champion.

"But you haven't had anything," she resumed, "and they're keeping it hot for you in the kitchen—that white house behind the damson trees at the end of the brick walk."

"I'll run there, get a bite and a cup of coffee, and be back in a minute."

"You don't think I mean you to eat there!" she cried fiercely. "What there is will be served to you in the dining-room, of course."

Lyndsay laughed—a merry, boyish peal, most cheering in this atmosphere of fright and woe.

"You forget where I've been feeding latterly. What luck would we have thought a hot meal in that nice old aunty's quarters after camp grub on the outposts! Don't fret about me. I'll get something and——"

His speech was cut unceremoniously short. A burning brand hurtled through the sky above, and falling between them grazed and set aflame the skirt of her flimsy summer gown. With an exclamation of dismay Lyndsay fell upon his knees beside her and forcibly extinguished it with his bare hands, afterward guiding her under shelter of the grapevine walk. Mona was shocked to see that his right hand was scorched, and, upon his declaring that it was nothing, ran into the house, returning with some fragrant unguent of Mammy Clarissa's that, applied by her own

rose-tipped fingers, had magical effect in lessening the pain. Lyndsay, submitting with a face half proud, half shamed, wondered which of the two was the more effective.

Later, they set forth together, during a lessening of the general alarm, and walked quickly to the vicinity of the Capitol.

Here the crowd had continued to increase, and, as they waited, hoping to cross a street, a Union officer riding toward them, gleaming like a sun-god in gold lace, reined in courteously, motioning the young lady to pass on ahead. At the same time an old, crazed negro, white-haired and weeping, tottered out from the throng on the sidewalk, and throwing himself upon the stones of the street, clasped the officer's spirited horse around the knees, lifting up his voice in a pæan of thanks for freedom. The horse reared and plunged. The emotional and dramatic element of the African race found its vent in responses, cries and resonant camp-meeting groans from the crowd along the sidewalk.

The Union officer did not find the situation to his taste. He was a handsome, distinguished young man, and as his vexed eye lit upon Mona's escort he made Private Lyndsay a quick, imperious sign to come to him, which Lyndsay, with military promptitude, obeyed.

The crowd, interested by this incident, gathered and surged around the girl. Left alone at its mercy she had a moment of alarm, quickly ended by the approach of the officer, who, after a brief exchange of words with Lyndsay, had slipped from his saddle, leaving the soldier to disengage the clinging devotee and lead away the horse.

"Miss Carlyle! Mona! Surely you haven't forgotten me, and your father bringing you to us in Newport the year before the war?"

Mona's face lighted with delighted reminiscence. The brilliant officer was an old acquaintance whom she little dreamed of meeting here. Her

father and his, a late senator and statesman of national renown, had been friends from boyhood. Young Dick Claxton, formerly in the habit of running down to them in Virginia for a week's shooting whenever he felt inclined, had been loved by every one of them. It was at his home in Newport that Mona had made her one memorable, enchanting visit to the North. They had known that Dick's father was dead, that he had given up a life of ease and a large fortune to go into the Northern army, and, politically speaking, the Carlyles had tacitly agreed to try not to think of one too nice and dear to reprobate.

Then an iron curtain had fallen between the families. Colonel Claxton, in coming to Richmond, had had the Carlyles continually in mind. He knew the old man's peppery temper and had heard with deep sorrow of the loss of his only son. The question of how to approach them had, as a fact, been bothering him night and day. And here the chance of his getting mixed up in a sensational scene on the street with a crazy dorky had cut the Gordian knot.

Mona's face, always eloquent, greeted her old chum Dick as if there had been no war. Then the present immediately hemmed her in, clouded her thoughts, silenced her utterance. Full of tact, although visibly uncomfortable, Colonel Claxton made haste to inform himself of the necessity for the ambulance. While they went on to arrange for it, he talked cheerfully of other days, asked affectionately after her father, and declared there could be nothing too much for him to do in behalf of that lovely lady, her mother, who had shown him a thousand kindnesses, whose country house had been to him a second home, and who had always remained his ideal of gentle and gracious Virginia matronhood.

Mona wondered, as she walked beside the big, splendid young man, a being more grand and prosperous than she had seen in years, what would be her next experience in this bewildering day. The first burst of pleasure

at their meeting had passed. She was assailed by the woeful sense of the contrast he presented to all of her own kin and friends, the thought of whom, in their poverty and curled-leaf shabbiness, almost choked her utterance. She felt a passionate desire to burst away from Dick and speed as fast as her feet would carry her to the covert of her home. Some day, not now, she would welcome him. She had even a sudden, eager wish that he would leave her and give back, in his place, the soldier Lyndsay, who had already seen the dreadful plight of her family and had shared their distresses.

But this Colonel Claxton did not in the least propose to do. Deeply moved by the encounter, he intended to devote himself to her exclusively. The poor little stricken girl, blown to him by a wind of destiny, was his and no other's until he had seen her and her household safe through the crisis. His arrangements quickly made, he conducted her homeward with all celerity, feeling, it must be said for the dashing colonel of volunteers, rather more apprehensive as he approached Mr. Carlyle's house than if it had been a rebel battery.

Richard Claxton's mind was speedily rid of any apprehension as to a truculent reception by his former friend. He found the old man sitting alone in the dismantled library, his head dropped upon his breast, his eyes dull, his face flushed, under charge of anxious Britannicus, who, standing in the rear of his master, telegraphed to the colonel—remembered well and gratefully—information in sign language that the case was one requiring extreme measures and great consideration. Britannicus, too, felt guilty, because it had been he who had just let his master extract from him the fact of the burning of the bank, a calamity which Mona had intended to keep back. This proved the last straw that crushed Alexius to earth. Nothing now remained between him and beggary. His cause was gone; the wife, whose malady he had thought a caprice, lay under the shadow of a cloud

worse than death; the fortune he had put into Confederate bonds had vanished into smoke; he had not even food for his child and servants; what bread they had had was the gift of negroes—and, last of all, Lancelot, his brave boy Lancelot, who was to be the staff of his old age, was one of an army overpowered in the last gasp, was perhaps even now lying still upon some bloody field of battle, or wounded, not wishing to survive the wreck.

The sight of Colonel Claxton's uniform entering the room had made him shrink for a moment, then try to rise in protest. When he recognized the visitor some gleam of old kindness came into his eyes, and he strove to bear himself with accustomed courtesy and to talk of casual things. But the effort could not last. His physical endurance did not keep pace with it. He fell again into an armchair, nerveless, flaccid, a very shadow of the gallant little gentleman whom Claxton recalled as the best rider, the straightest shot, the most accomplished raconteur and host of his acquaintance.

Leaving him to Britannicus, Claxton hastened out, a lump in his throat and the joy of victory dulled to him. Mona was waiting to tell him that their family physician had been there in her absence, urging emphatically the patient's removal without delay to the country home, where tender care and freedom from noise awaited her. The women had prepared Mrs. Carlyle where she lay in the garden on her cot. As they spoke, the ambulance ordered by Claxton, a beautiful, highly polished vehicle, the like of which had not greeted Richmond eyes, with a trim driver and orderly and fresh horses secured on the spot, drew up at the front door.

"I expected to go with her," the girl said, with filling eyes. "But now, since I have seen papa——"

"I wish you might get out of this dreadful business," returned Claxton feelingly, "but of course you know best, and if your mother has that unmatched old Mammy Clarissa she will want nothing. I'd give anything

I know to ride myself beside the ambulance, but it's impossible. I might help to carry her out."

"No, no," she said quickly.

He divined her impulse to reveal no more affliction than he had seen, and, promising to come tomorrow, turned to go away.

"Don't think I am discontented," she said, going out with him. "Of course, I am deeply disappointed not to be with her myself. If I could be in two places, filling two duties, I'd be happier."

On the front steps, where they brought up, stood Lyndsay, motionless, his hand to his cap, awaiting orders from his colonel.

Mona gave a little start of unfeigned satisfaction.

"Oh! Mr. Lyndsay has come back. Now all will go easier," she cried. "You have no idea, Dick, how good Mr. Lyndsay has been to us; how very much we owe him."

The colonel, looking amused, ignored the artless association of his personality with that of a private in his regiment. Stepping down to inspect the ambulance and instruct its driver to use especial care, he was attended by Lyndsay, who asked leave to speak with him.

Mona's reflection that "Mr. Lyndsay" must have been offended by her way of mentioning him was broken by Claxton's return.

"It's all right," he said cheerfully. "They have sent an excellent driver, and Lyndsay will accompany the party instead of the orderly who's there. Since you have already had this man of mine in your service today, and have confidence in him, I have accepted his suggestion. He will return here this evening to report how your dear mother has borne the expedition and remain as guard."

"That is more than we ought to ask," she answered, her face betraying the relief. "We have overworked Mr. Lyndsay as it is. But I can't bring myself to refuse."

"I hate to dispute it to anybody," said he feelingly. "My dear Mona, I

don't believe you half know how all this trouble of your father's has broken me up today. Thank heaven, I believe the house is safe. I'll come back again this evening and make sure."

"No, no, it would be better not," she protested.

He seemed unsatisfied, but wrung her hand and hurried off to duties impending, the centre of all the astonished eyes in the neighborhood gazing through all the windows, and of tongues expressing all the wonderment that the stoppage of a grand Yankee ambulance before the Carlyles' door had not already put into circulation.

Mona, whom the swift-rushing events of this day had induced to believe that yesterday was at least a week ago, stood for a moment feeling as if the world around her was a whirling dream and she the only real person in it. Was it here she had stood so recently watching her Confederate lover spur away from her and the doomed city? Where was poor Lance now, and what would he think of her for consorting so readily with his enemies? Was it disloyal, wrong, unworthy of her principles and degrading to her patriotism?

Ah, no! Lance, so just, so generous, a true soldier, who had surrendered this issue to the arbitrament of the sword, would be first to abide by the result. He knew that she was a helpless reed in the tremendous current of the hour. Above all he would recognize that a Carlyle could not receive benefits and fail to acknowledge them with courtesy. For her dear parents' sake, for the salvation of their home and of her mother's reason, she would do more than this, yet keep her loyalty to Lance and the South intact——

"Miss Carlyle."

A voice full of sympathy and kindness. Lyndsay had come to tell her that all was in readiness and to bring her from the nurse the doctor's suggestion that neither husband nor child should assist in Mrs. Carlyle's removal to the ambulance.

Mona flinched. Her soul rebelled against the parting, if her judgment sanctioned it. Until her mother's ill-

ness they had hardly ever been separated. That gentle, spiritual influence had been the most powerful motor of her young life. To have given up the care of her, even to faithful mammy, had been a keen sorrow, and now the passionate love binding this child and mother was to be wrenched anew. Mona had felt no such pang of surrender save when she gave her brother to his sleep in Hollywood.

"Oh, I must go with her—I must," she said yearningly.

A spectral face looked for a moment from the window of the library. It was her father's, vague, stricken, bewildered. Then she saw Britannicus come and lead him away and pull the shades down.

"I will stay," cried Mona.

Private Lyndsay looked after her as she dashed impetuously into the house and shut herself in the darkened library, with its dismantled shelves, to the society of the sad and forlorn old man. The young soldier felt moisture coming into his eyes, and wondered if this dreadful day were ever going to end.

When Colonel Claxton called again next morning he found a better state of things prevailing in his old friend's home. The servants, working since dawn, had restored books, pictures, ornaments, furniture to their accustomed places. Under Lyndsay's direction, the trodden garden had been refreshed and watered and the soft airs of another beautiful April day were blowing through open windows, bringing only from time to time a whiff of odor from the burned district.

Mona, in receiving Claxton, looked pale, but bore herself cheerfully. She asked him to excuse her father, who was resting in his own bedroom, and her face brightened in conveying the report Lyndsay had brought back of her mother's safe transfer to her cousin's airy home. The old nurse, after making her patient comfortable, had come down to find the guard waiting under a tree for a comforting message to take back to town. The invalid had not only borne the drive easily, but

had slept well, seemingly unaware of her change and the reason for it.

"That was a good idea of Lyndsay's stopping behind the ambulance to fetch you the last news," said the colonel approvingly. "The fellow's really a good sort and has all the instincts of a gentleman."

"A gentleman? Do you mean that he is not one?" exclaimed the girl, flushing quickly.

"My dear Mona, I mean nothing. I know absolutely nothing about the man more than I know of the rest of the regiment. Professionally speaking, he's first-rate. I might live a thousand years in our present relations before I'd find out his social status."

"It is different with us. Some of the noblest men and greatest heroes of our side have been privates, and we've honored them all the more for it. Their colonels were often their friends and relatives, and watched over them affectionately. You can't expect me, Dick, ever to look down upon a man because he doesn't wear little gold straps on his shoulders," she exclaimed with spirit.

"Go on! I'm glad you're getting your blood up," he answered good-humorably. "It's more like the sprightly Mona I knew first. Well, if I tell you that I am actually expecting a lieutenant's commission for your protégé—one that I applied for some time ago, to reward him for distinguished gallantry in action——"

"Did you? How glad I am!" she cried, then remembered herself and bit her lip.

"I did, honestly. The thing's been blocked by our advance on Richmond, I fancy."

"Oh, what do I care for that!" exclaimed the girl pettishly. "I think you are cruel to remind me of it."

"A thousand pardons. I fancied your interest in Lyndsay——"

"I do care for him to get what he deserves," she cried, torn by conflicting feelings.

"Then we'll both hope he'll get it, and dismiss Lyndsay from our thoughts. See here, Mona, I've received in the

past from your father much more than I ever repaid. I've stayed in his house for weeks, used his horses, guns, dogs—oh, you don't know how much I owe him. Now, don't be proud with me. Let me be your banker. Take this purse."

"But we don't need anything," she exclaimed heartlessly. "Since yesterday we've had such a windfall. It seems that a merchant in town, who was behindhand in a debt he owed papa for things from the plantation, sent us lots of supplies when he closed his store. If you could have seen how my poor, dear papa enjoyed real coffee, condensed milk and lump sugar, and actually butter for breakfast, you would have been glad. We are doing splendidly, I assure you. I feel almost tempted to ask you to take a meal with papa and me and Mr. Lyndsay."

The colonel looked surprised, not only at the conjunction of rank and no rank in selection of her dinner guests, but at the recital of the Tale of the Honest Merchant—compounded, of course, by Britannicus to cover the fact that Lyndsay was drawing rations for the family from the new Government's stores, not including certain delicacies purchased and paid for by the young soldier unknown to his fellow-conspirator.

Upon taking his leave, the colonel called up Private Lyndsay for an interview of investigation on the front porch. Exactly what passed between them has not transpired, but it is inferred that the guard received instructions to enlarge the Carlyles' bill of fare, not at the Government expense. Claxton, greatly touched by the incident, was only too glad to free Mona of the necessity of gratitude, and Private Lyndsay also rejoiced because of the exceeding paucity of his own resources under circumstances so impelling of imbursement.

In spite of the favorable news that continued to come from their invalid in the country, Monimia carried the heaviest burden of her life that week following the occupation. Her father

was in a nervous melancholy, sitting for hours alone, interested in nothing, repulsing her efforts at companionship, declining to see Colonel Claxton and all other visitors. She had no news from Lancelot further than the general information of the surrender of General Lee. Some friends from the army, straggling back dejectedly to their homes in Richmond, told her that he had survived the fighting, had given his parole with the others at Appomattox, and was believed to have set off on a journey across country on horseback to visit some property of his own, till now within the Federal lines.

All this perplexed Mona, and made her feel more than ever lonely and dependent upon herself. She was sure Lance had written, and that the letter had miscarried in the confusion of the hour. When her father showed so little desire for hearing about Lance, she knew how serious was his depression. In spite of the increase of palatable food she ate little, and at night spent many hours awake. Friends of the family, who, in the ever kind spirit of Richmond, thought of her troubles amid their own, came to offer service, but to all she gave the same quiet, self-controlled answer, that she wanted nothing and was doing very well. Colonel Claxton, seeing that his visits were rather an embarrassment than a help, stayed away; it was due to this fact that Lyndsay was left to look out for the little household after the actual need for it had passed away, Claxton exacting from the young man frequent bulletins of their condition. He did not need to enjoin watchfulness. Nor had it required this accident of war bringing the colonel and Lyndsay into closer touch for Claxton to be struck with the real quality of his young soldier, quietly content to hold his present grade. He had long ago noted Lyndsay's superiority in manner, temper and education, and upon the opportunity given by a special act of gallantry in action had taken steps toward his promotion, which he now awaited with some im-

patience, although keeping to himself his secret and sentimental fancy for the man.

Now it happened that Lyndsay, having been found by Mr. Carlyle deep in an old volume of the classics favored by that gentleman's fastidious taste, was led into making some comments thereupon, and ended by offering to read aloud to poor, purblind Alexius, who at first merely suffered him to do so. In the course of the reading the old scholar roused up, sniffed the air like the Scriptural war horse, charged into the fray, made a correction here and there of Lyndsay's pronunciation, and was soon thick in discussion of the text. After that first hour Mr. Carlyle's eyes wore a temporary brightness; he ate and was pleased to compliment one of Phoebe's strawberry soufflés. Later he dropped back into gloom and inertia. But the literary experiment, superintended with thankfulness by Mona, had proved one inviting early repetition.

She left her charge one afternoon taking a restful nap, and stole out, as she thought, unobserved, to the service of prayer, one of the most frequent episodes of Richmond in captivity. The voice of the clergyman who read the service might have come from beyond the veil, so sad it was and fraught with tremulous feeling.

As the young girl left her pew upon the dismissal of the congregation, hand after hand grasped hers in silence.

To her astonishment Mona found awaiting her at the entrance of the church the solitary figure of Donald Lyndsay.

He had never ventured to join her on the street on the few occasions when she left her father. As he now did so, with a look in his eyes giving her the assurance of full understanding and sympathy, she knew that he had been present during the service.

They walked back to the house without speaking. The surprise and satirical glance of a lady who passed the ill-assorted pair, nodding coolly to Mona and shrugging disdainfully at

the soldier, struck Lyndsay with a most unpleasant pang.

It awakened him from a fool's paradise. The realization of what was indeed between them came like an electric shock, for he now recognized his love for her, and the fact that he could no more expect to win her than the sea can reach the moon.

IV

For three days the armies had traveled westward, fighting as they went. Lee's attempt to gain a safe stronghold in the mountains beyond Lynchburg had been disputed at every step by an enemy his equal in gallant endeavor, and also well fed, well clothed and nerved to daring by the early prospect of success.

On April 6 Lieutenant-Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, having caught up with his command, shared in his regiment's galling defeat at Sailor's Creek. By the evening of the eighth, with the spent remnant of his brothers in arms, he reached Appomattox Court House, still believing that a last rally of their forces under Lee might save the Confederacy. Nightfall of April 9 saw the final crash of the last atom of illusion.

It was over—the tremendous four years of war, entered into by the flower of the South with such valorous gaiety of spirit, during that springtime in Virginia when first the air was vibrant with the calls of trumpets, the rumbles of guns and caissons and the roll of drums—when first the Stars and Bars took the April winds with daring!

Wretched as he had never before been in his buoyant life, exhausted, overstrained in nerve and heart, Lancelot Carlyle spent the night after the ending of hostilities wrapped in his blanket on the ground, sleeping as though only the Last Trump could awake him.

With morning and the distribution of Confederate rations captured by General Sheridan and conceded by General Grant to the surrendered

troops, he tried to assemble his scattered faculties and decide what the future held for him. After all, when the sun shines bright and a man has youth and strength and an unmaimed body, and, over yonder in Richmond, the sweetest little girl in the South has promised to be his bride, the world is not all black! Shaking off his despondency of overnight, Lance penciled to Mona a scrawl bidding her take heart for the present; since he was well and would rejoin her as soon as possible after achieving a visit to Foxcroft, where he had decided to try for a livelihood as a farmer.

This opportunity of the end of war was the first he had had to investigate the property coming to him upon the demise of his bachelor cousin, the late Mr. Julian Carlyle. He knew the place only through a visit in childhood, when it had seemed a boy's paradise for gunning and fishing. No ancient estate of many acres exacting slave labor to make them profitable—but, as he vaguely remembered, a snug little farm near the Potomac, surrounding a forest lodge, filled with books, rods and guns, wherein one might live in comfort, and earn a support to meet moderate expectations. He felt sure Mona would be quick to understand his taking immediate steps to settle down to this work before getting under the influence of her father, whose high-flown notions of fealty to ancestral lands might plunge the young couple into some futile attempt to build up the Goochland place on nothing.

Thus the curtain fell upon Appomattox, and the beaten Confederates trooped homeward. "The Cause" had vanished into thinnest smoke. In the wake of Lincoln's assassination the region on either side of the Potomac near Washington was now a vast hunting-ground for suspected people. Not a wood or swamp—hotbed of malaria though it might be, with its undergrowth of dank vegetation, sought only by creeping things and the hunted coon fleeing from the wet-lipped dogs—escaped the vigilance of

searching cavalrymen. On the Virginia side every fishing-hut and hamlet, every weather-beaten farmhouse and roadside tavern, barn and corn-crib, was ransacked by secret service men.

It was a terrible time—a gruesome time—and more than one innocent person fell a victim to its inflamed conditions. But Lancelot Carlyle, on his way to this dangerous territory, lost some days through the laming of his horse, and had to tarry in the house of a family buried in the pine woods, to whom news of the national calamity had not yet come. He did not, therefore, actually hear of it until in the neighborhood of Foxcroft, a few miles from his destination.

The great tidings came to him first from some loafers, sitting a-tilt upon split-bottomed chairs, on the porch of a crossroads grocery, draped with a cheap United States flag in mourning.

Lance had stopped there for the double purpose of making sure he was on the right road to Foxcroft and of filling his haversack with supplies for use upon arrival. The men looked with incredulity upon his astonished dismay over their intelligence of the murder of the President. They were decidedly suspicious of his request for a newspaper containing particulars, and the storekeeper, a surly German and recent settler in those parts, before furnishing him with what groceries he asked for demanded to look at his parole.

Suppressing his impatience, Lancelot showed the paper, which passed from hand to hand of the curious group, was the subject of silent disfavor; and while his parcels were being made up, it occurred to him to ask if a certain family of Dares, dimly recalled at the moment, were still the nearest neighbors of his cousin's isolated house. The effect of this simple query took him by surprise. The loungers sat erect, nudged one another, and one of them answered meaningly:

"Guess you'd better not ask loyal Union folks any questions like that, stranger. Thought you Corn-feds 'ud

surely know all they is to tell 'bout them rip-roarin' secesh, the Dares, as was druv out o' these parts first-off in the war. Most rebs have hearn tell o' *her*, I reckon."

"Lucky for old man Dare, he died arly in the scrimmage," observed another more good-natured countryman. "Guess he'd 'a' had his hands full trying to boss *her* doin's among the rebels. And the boy wuz just *her* stripe. Say, stranger, if I wuz wantin' to keep out o' mischief hereabouts I wouldn't own to knowing any Dares. Or befo' doin' so, I'd take speshul pains to cut them rebel buttons off."

"Reckon he'll have to be gettin' himself a new coat befo' long, anyhow," put in a sarcastic loungeer, himself a thing of patches and tobacco stains, while the others laughed derisively.

Carlyle, his face reddened with wrath, touched his horse with the spur and rode away at speed. It was some time before he could recover his equilibrium of temper. His thoughts, during the last hours of following a country road, on either side of which landmarks, remotely familiar, began to loom up before him, were deeply tinged with blue.

But on reaching the boundaries of his own property he became conscious of a throb of hope for the future. In his heart there was left no enmity. The constitutional theory of the right of secession having been fought out and defeated, there assuredly remained to him the right to snatch his salvation from the wreck; and this he was honestly prepared to do.

Dusk was falling when Lance halted before the old red gate indicated as leading into the Foxcroft estate. As he fumbled with the loop of grapevine holding gate and post together, his eye was caught by a stack of chimneys at some distance down on the far side of the road, rising black against the red of the western sky among the pines of a wooded ridge.

In a flash it came to him that this was the home of the suspicious Dares. The family, its individuals and their surroundings, so long out of his mind,

came back to him distinctly. He had gone once with his kinsman to spend the day with them—a long, full, Virginia day, arriving early and stopping late. After the midday meal, while the gentlemen discussed over their cigars the duel between Randolph, of Roanoke, and Henry Clay, the mistress of the house had invited young Lance and her own children to go out into the paddock and see her break a colt—a feat accomplished by the slim, dark lady with notable success. He remembered having thought her a sort of Joan of Arc, who, if called upon, would lead armies and walk calmly to the stake.

The girl—he fancied they named her Cecil—was a valiant little spitfire. She had offered to fight Lance because he said her twin brother was “a sneak.”

“Which he certainly was, if my memory serves me, the youngster!” the colonel went on to reflect. “But a handsome devil and fairly worshiped by that game sister of his.”

Here, the red gate opened, heavily sagging through a recently made groove in the earth. As far as he knew to the contrary, nobody had inhabited the house since it had been vacated the year before. A long existing legend that Foxcroft was haunted by the spirit of a former occupant, poisoned by a negro slave woman, had, indeed, been the best assurance Lance could have had of the safety of its belongings after his cousin's death.

There was no further indication of disturbance of the soil. His way led between neglected fields, into an old wood road running through a thick forest of oak and beech, sweet-gum and dogwood, where tree-frogs were already beginning their night song, and from afar came the note of a lonely whip-poorwill. He started forward at a gallop. It would be a relief to be well out of this weird tunnel of greenery, and, after passing through another gate, to be striking into the avenue of hoary locusts leading to the house.

Lance came up in a tam-o'-shanter run before his own front door. The

house was shabby, steep-roofed, overgrown with creepers that hung in a matted curtain over the porch of entrance. In the roof arose two queer dormer windows like owls' ears. As he pushed aside the drapery of vines to go in a bird flew into his face, a hare ran across his feet. The door was locked, and no sound answered his knock. Leaving his horse tied to a decaying rack, he made good his failure to enter otherwise by opening a window and vaulting lightly across the sill. The method had for him some of the zest of boyish exploration, and he landed inside with delight.

Lance found himself in the old “living-room,” well remembered for its free-and-easy ways and customs, its bounteous meals, its walls lined with books and guns and fishing tackle, its roaring wood fires, and the way dogs and negro lads had forever stalked in and out of it. Looking around him at the plain, massive furniture, the young colonel decided that a man with a sensible wife might do worse than set to housekeeping at Foxcroft just as things were, adding a few feminine comforts to make Mrs. Lancelot feel at home.

Crossing the hall he continued his researches in the spare chamber, where he had once been put to sleep, his eccentric cousin occupying a sort of huntsman's bunk in a rough annex back of the living-room. To Lancelot's surprise he found his old quarters swept, garnished and eminently habitable.

To the eyes of a tired wayfarer, who for months had slept upon mud or moss or frozen mire, under rain or snow-drifts, the present accommodations for the night seemed palatial. His spirits went up with a jump; he put himself no questions, but after providing for his horse in a stable not totally devoid of equine comforts, he returned joyfully to build a fire in the gaping throat of the spare-room chimney.

To aid in this purpose, he found even a pile of dry hickory logs, with “fat wood” kindling in a basket, on one side of the hearth. He also saw that the bed of ashes, neatly swept under

the old iron-dogs, was clearly of far later date than the year before.

Certainly some visitor had been lately at Foxcroft—perhaps some man of law, acting in his interest; certainly a man of forethought, whose absent shade he blessed.

When the flames, licking around his pile of hickory and pine, met together above it in a glorious swirl of golden radiance, Lance had the sensation of feeling cheered to the marrow of his bones. By the time the embers had begun to drop and he discovered in a corner cupboard a clean outfit of cooking utensils, the poor ex-rebel rubbed his hands with glee. That lawyer fellow had known how to bivouac in style! After a dash outside to fill his kettle at the well, the colonel proceeded to cook and eat the most satisfactory of suppers that had perhaps ever fallen to his lot.

Ah! what a brand-new sensation this, of being dry, well filled and sumptuously housed after a long day's march! His ambitions for the moment were quite satisfied. He felt happy, hopeful. He laughed aloud at thought of his late discouragement.

This was home—a poor thing, but his own!

Planning his future, he felt sure that the problem not only of existence but of success would soon be solved for him. He had survived the storm; he was young and strong and had all his powers.

Presently he lighted a pair of candles upon a stand nearby, and took up a book someone had read and left there. It was one of the earlier novels of Dumas, *père*, full of the rollicking joy of a young man's living. It amused him well until, overpowered with sudden drowsiness, he extinguished the light and dropped, dressed as he was, upon the bed to fall instantly dead asleep.

He had no watch, no knowledge of time to guide him. When he awoke suddenly a few hours later it was to some uncertainty as to where he might actually be, but with a full consciousness that someone besides himself was in the room.

Looking out between the bed-curtains he saw a young woman in a riding-habit standing upon the threshold of the open door, holding a small lantern in her hand.

She was tall and admirably made. Her first action, after stepping inside and closing and locking the door, was an essentially feminine one. Setting the lantern upon a high chest of drawers before a tall, dim mirror, she took off her hat and shook out impatiently a stream of blond hair that had been swaying half knotted in her neck.

Lance had never heard of a ghost of her sex at Foxcroft. Before he could formulate any supposition concerning her she had retwisted her locks and coiled them upon the summit of a charming head. Then, breathing a distinct sigh of womanly relief, she crossed the room to the fireplace, and discovered the remnants of his fire!

Lance saw her start and shudder back almost humanly, seizing her lantern to retreat. He noticed in her right hand the gleam of a small pistol snatched quickly from her belt.

Before she could move further he stood quietly facing her. One glance at his shabby uniform sufficed to relax her tense attitude and banish from her face its expression of mortal fear.

"Whoever you are, I'm certain you're not here for harm," he said. "Please let me assure you you need be afraid of no inconvenience at my hands."

"Oh, thank God!" she cried. "If you knew what I feared——"

"Never mind that now. Sit down and compose yourself. It's impossible you can be here alone?"

"Oh, but I am. No one in the world is responsible for my coming but myself," she protested eagerly.

"I'm not asking you that. Is it you who have been stopping before me in this room?"

"I have been here—once. I—knew the owner—I know the neighborhood," she said evasively. "But is it possible you can be——?"

"The man to whom Foxcroft now belongs? Quite possible. I am Lancelot Carlyle. But first—you are tired and chilly. Let me light the candles and kindle up the fire."

Ignoring the fact that she panted and fluttered like a bird new-caged, he drew together the charred fragments of the logs and insinuated between them some bits of resin-saturated pine. Immediately a splendid glow filled all the room. Ashamed to be revealed in it, the girl dropped into a chair and hid her face in her hands.

"This is hardly gracious," he said, smiling.

"It is foolish. You could not know me," she declared, bravely disclosing to his gaze a beautiful, fear-smitten countenance. He saw that her alarm had been of no common order. A young woman who could invade alone a deserted house at midnight was possessed of more than the ordinary nerve of her sex. It was some terror of character indefinable that at sight of him had dilated her bright eyes and blanched her firm, round cheeks.

He proceeded to warm up the coffee he had previously made, to toast and butter some biscuits and strips of bacon, giving her time to recover her self-possession.

"Soldier's fare," he said, over his shoulder. "But you are evidently a veteran in adventure. Please," he added, turning back, "taste these now to oblige your chef."

As she ate and drank and warmed herself at his bidding, gradually the color came back into her face, a girlish gleam into her eye.

"There were things to eat in that little cupboard," she said, pointing to a corner. "But not so nice as these. Canned things, which I hate."

"Now for your horse," he said, "for I am sure you have ridden far."

"Oh, Starlight is all right," she answered. "I turned her saddled into the stable. She's accustomed to find her own stall. I fed and watered her not an hour ago, Mr.—no, Colonel Carlyle, isn't it?"

"I was so till Appomattox," he said bitterly. "Now, nothing."

"Don't say that! More than ever to me a hero in such defeat!" she cried. "I am going to put your trust in me to a sharp test. I owe you every explanation. I can give you none."

"I accept, if I must, the reservation. And now, clearly, the best service I can show a young lady under these circumstances is to turn out and let her sleep in comfort till tomorrow morning."

He went over and unlocked the door.

"You are too generous. I would not consent to 'turning you out,' but that I *must* be in this room alone for a little while."

"Surely not too generous to a sister in arms who has fallen upon such hard luck. Perhaps by daylight you will feel more communicative. Colors seen by candle-light, you know—"

She interrupted him hastily.

"By daylight I shall be far away. The only favor I dare ask is that you won't inquire who I am nor what I do here. If all goes as I hope this will be my very last visit to Foxcroft. But I think this much is due to you, Colonel Carlyle. You are not entirely a stranger to me. I know I can trust your forbearance. Upon the business that brought me here tonight hangs something so vast and terrible—a further calamity so appalling to the poor, ruined South—"

Lance drew a quick breath and gazed at her in dismay. She did not lower her eyes that met his with a strange intensity.

"Then, for God's sake, why are you mixed in it?"

"Not for myself," she exclaimed, blanching at the hint of displeasure in his looks. "But, oh! I daren't say more."

He stood appalled. But her face and manner had in them nothing that fell short of truth. She, at least, had done no foul thing nor touched it even with finger-tips. It was cruel that a beautiful young girl, with slender, rounded form and lips meant for kissing

and consoling, should be driven thus under the shadow of black suspicion.

"Now you must leave me, for I am very tired," she exclaimed, with a womanly gesture of fatigue, "and I have still my chief work to do."

He hesitated, then offered her his hand. She took it frankly, as they stood for a moment together upon the hearth. Accustomed though he was to the strange happenings of that war in which women had been often called on to play foremost parts, she piqued his curiosity and interested him more than anyone had ever done before.

They were about to separate when a blow struck on the shutters behind the drawn curtains of the room caused them to spring apart and gaze at each other in dismay.

V

"REMEMBER, whatever happens, you will trust me," she whispered, with white lips.

"I will at least try," he answered, half smiling to put heart in her, though his hand felt for his pistol.

The front door of the house was burst open with a resounding crash. The hurry of heavy feet passed through the hall, and two Union soldiers, led by a man in ordinary clothes, came into the room.

They were mud-splashed and spent with hard riding. Their breath came short and the gleam of eager triumph was in their eyes.

The first impulse of Lancelot Carlyle was the one that had carried him often through many a tighter squeeze than this. He measured his opponents with a dangerous glance, his nerves and muscles strung for action.

"May I ask, gentlemen," he said smoothly, "to what I am indebted for the honor of this unseemly call?"

He was answered by the man in plain clothes, a burly, tobacco-chewing individual, with porcine eyes and a strong negro accent.

"Well, Johnny Reb, I reckon the best you can do is to ask no questions,

but just come along with us as soon as we've searched these premises. But we won't part you from the lady. Seein' she's got a horse ready waitin' beside youn in the stable, we'll just take her, too."

A quiet and perfectly even voice spoke in Lancelot's ear. To his utter surprise a white hand was slipped within his arm.

"You'll hardly do that, gentlemen," said the strange young woman, with a little laugh, "when my husband carries General Grant's parole in his pocket and we've just arrived today to take possession of our home."

She glanced into the detective's face appealingly, her eyes unconcerned as a child's.

"Paroled Corn-fed, is he?" said the man, evidently taken aback, while Lancelot remained rigid under the light but firm control of the woman's touch. "Look here, sis, nobody asked you to put your oar in, but the devil himself can't get the bit on a gal's tongue when she's a mind to be a-gabbin'."

"You know your Government told them all to go straight home and set to work," she interjected gaily.

"That's all right, but, Johnny, it's you I'm a-talkin' to. If you're what your wife says I reckon you've got papers to show for it, and if not you'll have to tell me what you're a-doin' here."

With fingers that burned Lancelot took from his pocket the parole given him at Appomattox. He longed to tell the plain truth about the whole business and be done with it, yet held his tongue.

Drawing back into the light of the candles, the detective examined the paper narrowly, whistled, showed it to his men, scrutinized the pair under suspicion, then uttered a discontented grunt.

"Seems like I been barkin' up the wrong tree, don't it? If you're Lancelot Carlyle, then you're second cousin to old man Julian Carlyle that I worked for heah, befo' the war, overseenin' niggers an' runnin' the farm for him. My name's Timothy Dollar, 'n' I was bawn

and raised over on the banks o' Rappahannock. Would be thar yit, I reckon, but that I've got a gal an' she was kind o' restless livin' in the country, so I went up to Wash'n't'n and took to the secret service biz. 'Twas on account o' me knowin' the country so well they put me onto this here jawb. Look here, suh, ole man Carlyle allers did the square thing by me, and was good to my little gal. I'm goin' to put it to you fair and honest. Air you reely Lancelot Carlyle?"

"To the best of my knowledge and belief, I am," answered Lance, the grasp upon whose arm tightened convulsively.

"And you've just got to Foxcroft?"

"A few hours ago."

"You didn't know, when you came here, that your house had lately been occupied by other parties? Answer, on your life."

"Certainly I did not."

"Oh, now, when are you gentlemen going to stop this nonsense?" interrupted the girl, coquettishly appealing. "I think the least you can do, Mr. Dollar, to make up for interrupting us on our very first evening is to drink to our health and happiness."

She talked fast, with the intonation of a spoiled Southern belle. Loosening her hold on Lancelot she went over to a cupboard on the inside of the chimney jamb, and, with some ostentation of delay in finding them, took out a black bottle, with glasses, which, after supplementing them with the pitcher of water, she placed coquettishly upon the table.

For the first time a relaxation of muscles visited the anxious countenance of Mr. Dollar, divided between baffled professional zeal, admiration of a pretty girl and loyalty to the family of his late employer. The two German soldiers, heretofore imperfectly *au courant* of affairs, saw at last what was agreeably clear to their understanding.

"If I only had some mint I'd make you one of my best juleps," said the young woman, while gaily serving them. "I'm sorry to say, Colonel Car-

lyle and I have just eaten all the food there is for tonight. But there's a tin of biscuits left in the cupboard and some potted beef——"

"No supper, I'm 'bleeged to you, marm," returned Dollar. "We got a bite a little piece down the road from Port Royal, and I reckon we'll just be gettin' to work ag'in."

His further utterance was impeded by a portentous swallow of whisky but feebly adulterated with water. His soldiers followed suit. Then Mr. Dollar's voice returned to him in jovial cadence.

"You see, friend Carlyle, I consider myself reel obligated to your cousin, and so does my gal Jooly. He giv' her what eddication she has, an' she's powerful peart to learn. Many's the time he's told me this property would go to you when he kicked the bucket. When things git settled down a bit I'd be pleased to give you a hint or two 'bout workin' the farm to make it pay. It's run behind, o' course, but a man could live off it—yass, suh, he could live."

"That's all we're asking now, Mr. Dollar," answered Lancelot, with a touch of his usual bonhomie.

"Oh, with a smart stirrin' wife like yourn, colonel, you'll surely hit it off. Here's wishin' you and her good luck an' no bad blood between us if I *did* take you for the dangerous young devil we're lookin' for."

Whatever Lancelot would have answered was snatched from his lips by the girl.

"You aren't going, Mr. Dollar, without telling us who that mysterious person is?"

"Cert'nly, marm, it's natteral you'd like to know why we broke up a honeymoon, for that's what I take it to be with you and the colonel here. But in my biz we don't explain—we act. There's too much mischief abroad these days to tell secrets. If we'd 'a' been lucky enough to catch that one—and one other—a woman, but not a young creetur like you, though she looks so on first sight—I don't want to give you an unpleasant shock, but, as the sayin'

goes, they'd 'a' danced on nothin', sure as God's in heaven."

His speech, beginning jocularly, ended in a grim and sinister whisper.

The two soldiers seemed to reflect his mood.

"Make your mind easy," said Lancelot, to bridge a shuddering movement that ensued. "No matter what has been, no criminal shall find shelter here again, I promise you. And now, Mr. Dollar, since we can furnish you with nothing in your line——"

"Well, ez I says, I reckon me an' my men'll be lookin' elsewhere," rejoined Dollar, regaining his cheerful tone. "Of course, colonel, you understand it's our duty fust to search this house and barn, an' I'd prefer for you and madam to set down quietly here till we've done it."

Lancelot dropped into a chair, where the firelight and candle-light fell full upon his handsome, open face. The girl quickly came up behind him, and now stood with one hand upon his shoulder, upon which he felt a slight, nervous pressure, but she spoke no more.

"Certainly, Mr. Dollar; no doubt you know the place better than I do," answered he pleasantly.

"Then so long, colonel; so long, madam! As the feller says in the play, 'I hope I don't intrude!' Whenever you want my advice about the crops, colonel, here's a card that'll reach me in Wash'n't'n. May we meet in happier times!"

They were gone, leaving behind them an abominable reek of whisky and onions and the sweat of hard-ridden horses and hard-riding men. While the jar of their footsteps continued to wake echoes in the silent house, until after the clatter of their horses' hoofs had receded in the woods, neither the seated man nor the standing woman moved, although the hearts of both were thumping fiercely.

Then the girl wavered, tottering, and he, rising, placed her in his chair. She was ghastly to look upon, her face and lips colorless, her whole body beginning to shake as if palsied.

He saw that she dared not lift her eyes to him. He heard her murmur piteously:

"Oh, forgive—forgive."

"You are asking much," he said coldly.

"It was my last hope," she stammered, her gaze eagerly entreating.

"For whom have you done this thing? What is involved in it? Who are the criminals? What is their crime?" he asked harshly.

"It was the madness of partisanship that inspired those I have tried to save. What was meant will never be accomplished now, but—there—what does it matter? If the ones those men sought had been here, instead of us, they could never, never have been saved from a horrid fate. Oh! I can't delay a minute longer what I came here to do."

She darted to the cupboard back of the chimney-breast, feeling in it till she brought out a canvas-lined envelope containing letters and papers.

"I saw that these were in there when I went to get the whisky—hidden under a loose board. God! will they burn fast enough?"

She had stooped, casting the packet upon the bed of red-hot coals. It caught, browned, crisped, curled at the edges, retained for a moment its shape, although of a clear, transparent red, then fell away forever into nothingness.

Even this was not enough to satisfy her desperate eagerness. She seized bits of kindling, stirred with them the ashes of the papers, held them under the logs till the pile broke again into leaping, crackling flames, and every corner of the chamber was made light as day. In the glare her face and figure were to Lancelot instinct with new and effulgent beauty. Beside the emotion she created in his veins all other impulses of life seemed glacial.

"Whatever you've done that's rash and daring, you are a brave, true woman!" he cried. "You've had a frightful ordeal. It's my place to ask your pardon, and I do."

"No, no; I have taken an unfor-

givable liberty. I can never look you in the face again," she said, seating herself, exhausted, for a moment's rest. "All I can do now is to leave you, the sooner the better, you will say."

"Leave me? Never!"

"But I must," she said, restraining him by a glance.

"No. If you want to be alone it is I who will leave you. Should you require the whole house I will take my blanket and sleep outside—beside my horse—anywhere!"

"Colonel Carlyle, listen to me. I have already involved you in shameful suspicion, and perhaps the end has not come yet. This I deeply, overwhelmingly, regret. I shall remember and blush for it to the last day of my life. It was the impulse of a despairing moment, not only in the protection of those most dear to me, but to save the South from another cruel wrong."

"The protected ones include an actual husband, I presume?" he exclaimed, with an unreasonably jealous pang.

"That I will not answer," she said, coloring vividly. "Your best safety lies in knowing nothing whatever about me."

"But I must know. I accept all risks. At least tell me if you are married?"

"Did I not just confess as much to good Mr. Dollar?" she cried, with a flash of mischief.

In the great relief she had experienced something of merry, dauntless womanhood came back to her. Lancelot's look of masculine annoyance at being thus kept at bay seemed even to afford her satisfaction.

"You cannot go now at this hour, in this darkness. It is impossible," he said, striding about the room.

"I cannot stay here. It is improper, impossible," she answered firmly.

"Then I'll ride away anywhere, so long as it's far enough. The house is yours till you choose to vacate it."

"No, you must understand I came here solely to get those papers and to

destroy them at any risk. To have accomplished that no personal effort or sacrifice seemed too much. Before daybreak I must be back where I came from, unsuspected."

"Let me ride with you."

"On no account. You should never be seen with me. If you are the gentleman I've trusted in you'll not try to find a trace of me. I know my way, and my mare is a darling who would carry me safely to the world's end."

"Should you meet any of the gentry who've just called on us?"

"They're on another tack, that party. I fear next to nothing now. If all goes well, the whole of the mad enterprise I've spoiled will fall crashing down like a card castle. I shall suffer for it in one way, but I can stand that—after a few days I shall breathe free again. For then I and—the causes of my anxiety—will be no longer on this hemisphere. Please let that suffice for you."

"You ask too much. No man could let a woman ride out in the night unprotected——"

"But I'm not just an ordinary, timid girl," she interrupted. "Our border women, nursed by war, have had more than one experience ruder than this to carry with them into peace times. Besides, the habit of adventure's in my blood. If you knew—but you can't know—there, I'll stop talking. I must be off."

"This is but a poor ending of it all for me," said Lancelot, unwillingly fascinated by her beauty and frank speech.

"What can I say to repeat my thanks? But for you, at this moment I should have been condemned to lifelong misery and shame——" She stopped, shuddering.

"It was nothing. Any man would have done it for a brave girl in such distress. Remember, I am relying upon your solemn word that in the disgraceful business you hint at you had no share."

She blushed deeply. A sob caught in her breath.

"Not I—oh, Colonel Carlyle, I

swear to you it is over now. Over, I tell you—nothing can come of it. It's like a loaded shell dropped into water. I shall sleep henceforward and not be weighed to earth by fear and humiliation—unless," she added, stung by a sudden thought, "this could in any way react on you."

"I don't know, nor can I guess, what your mystery is, but my hands are, I think, sufficiently clear of that kind of thing," returned Lancelot, smiling. "The record of one of Lee's soldiers up to the date of the surrender, and since, ought to be easy enough to read."

"But—but—the idea tortures me. I am losing my nerve, I think. If—the lie I told were ever to inconvenience you—I could never be happy again. I would slave on my knees to atone for it."

"You said I am not entirely unknown to you. Tell me who you are—let me see you somewhere again, and I'll more than pardon you."

He spoke with fire. She drew suddenly away from him, and crossing the room took her plumed hat from where she had laid it on coming in, and, standing before the dim mirror, put it on, looking, it occurred to him, like some pictured cavalier of the time of Charles I.

Her determined avoidance of him, her self-control and careful speech had, however, their refrigerating effect. The whole thing began to assume an unreal air.

He watched her settle her hat in place while uttering a little exclamation of annoyance that she had not got it straight; saw her feel that her belt and pistol were in order; then turning again to him with a calm air of finality, she held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Colonel Carlyle. Don't even come with me to the stable, please. Stay just where you are, and think me a bad dream!"

"This is all?" He could not help upbraiding her. "You leave me like this when, but a few moments since, you clung to my arm and called me——"

"What it shall be the study of my

life to live down," she interrupted, demurely courtesying, and was gone. As the heavy mahogany door closed after her, its cold panel ill supplied the place of her breathing loveliness. He started to follow her, but held back. For the first time it dawned upon Lancelot Carlyle that it was not fitting for poor little Mona's affianced husband to be in pursuit of such a distinctly adorable, strange young woman, who, worse luck, had given him every proof that she wished to avoid his future acquaintance. He sat down again before the fire, obstinately staring into the coals. The midsummer madness, engendered by the hour, strange circumstance and her extraordinary charm, was over. He frowned, his jaw became set and obstinate at thought of his own fatuity. He heard the departing gallop of her horse over the soft wood road without wishing to follow her. Then the underlying menace of the whole adventure forced itself baldly upon him. He had let himself be used as a cloak for what conspiracy, had forever fastened upon himself the odium of what acted lie? He reviewed every incident of their conversation, trying to convince himself that no gentleman would have acted otherwise than as he did; he had some shame-faced moments in recalling how his blood had coursed quicker beneath the velvety touch of her hand on his arm or shoulder, and finally set to wondering how she could be justified in asserting a previous knowledge of his identity.

In Virginia, where all men of a certain class may in general trace out a family friendship or even a remote connection without stretching too fine a point, this claim of antecedent familiarity with a newly made acquaintance does not take one unduly by surprise. But while Lancelot, too thoroughly roused and excited to think again of sleep, racked his brain with speculation, the first gleam of dawn through the windows brought the solution of the mystery. His unintended visitor could be none other than Cecil Dare!

How curiously it came back to him—her features, the turn of her head, the dauntless look out of her eyes. She had grown beautiful with womanhood, perilously so, he realized to his cost. But she had never lost the child's limpid purity of gaze any more than the old, impetuous self-sacrifice of her nature in defense of one she loved. He quickly put beside this recollection of her what the men at the crossroads had said about the Dare family—their cynical advice to him as to the mother and brother!

The clue at last! The old, old story! It was they—her unworthy relatives—whom Cecil had been shielding! Lancelot saw again her flaming blue eyes and crimson cheeks, her flying golden locks, her look like a youthful angel at the gate when the little girl had stepped before him and threw down the gage of battle to her brother's accuser!

At this point fatigue and sleep took matters into their own hands. Stumbling wearily over to the bed, he fell again upon it like a log.

Broad sunlight streamed through the faded red of the curtains when Lancelot awoke. The trees shadowing the house were alive with the cheerful song and twitter of nesting birds. When he went to draw water for his bath out of the moss-grown and fern-fringed well, the delicious freshness of the air revived his full strength and spirits. Poising the bucket on the brim, he stood gazing into the green wood that crept up nearly to the back porch. Most of the woods he had seen this spring had been cut to shreds with bullets, their young growth gnawed off by starved men and animals, the verdure and bloom that should have been underfoot trampled with mud and blood.

Here were long, dewy vistas—aisles of tender green, lit by the glow of pink honeysuckle and the white blur of flowering dogwood, the moss beneath gemmed with blue-eyed innocents and flushed windflowers. Looking elsewhere, his eye rested upon wide fields

—his own fields—and verdant pastures. How sweet and full of promise seemed to him this possession where war had not ravaged! He would put away from it all odious thoughts and associations. He could hardly believe that the episode of the night, with its hateful suggestions of crime and conspiracy, had been more than a dream figment.

After cooking and enjoying a hearty breakfast, Colonel Carlyle, feeling himself once more of sound and normal mind, went out to visit his horse and make a general tour of the premises near the house. He espied coming up the road to the front door an old negro couple, carrying across their shoulders sticks upon which swung bundles tied in bandanna handkerchiefs. A short colloquy revealed them to be Mars and Dilsey, former slaves of his Cousin Julian, weary of seeking support in the turmoil of a city and trudging back to their old home in the hope of finding thereabout a vacant cabin and a patch of land in which corn would grow and watermelons might be coaxed. They had accumulated money enough to buy a couple of pigs and a few chickens. The rest they perforce left to Providence, seeing that old Marse had vacated that place in their trustful imaginations.

The colonel, whom they recognized with effusion as a chip of the old block, offering him the homage born with the African in servitude, felt that Uncle Mars and his junior and fifth wife, Dilsey, had, in a way, dropped from the skies to meet his most stringent need. He straightway explained to them his position, arranged to pay the modest wages they required, let them install themselves in a cabin in the yard formerly occupied by his cousin's cook and her family, and felt that he had made a formidable stride in his new life of effort and forgetfulness.

The next step was to stock his establishment with such provisions as would supply its modest needs. For this purpose, leaving the proud negroes in charge, he rode over, although reluctantly, to the nearest source of house-

hold merchandise—the crossroads grocery visited the day before.

VI

PRIVATE LYND SAY was in a most vexatious predicament. The surge of war that had stranded him on this dangerous shore, where a sea nymph sang irresistibly, had left him without the means of escape possible to his superior officer. He was simply obliged to stay on where he was and meet and surmount the risk of passing hours; to undergo the alternate happiness and wretchedness of contact with a tabooed young person, who, without the least warning by Fate, had really come to be the centre of all his thoughts and aspirations!

Lyndsay was, it must be said, perfectly content to stay either in the magic garden where Time stood still, while he renewed a former fancy for ministering to plants and flowers, or else in the library, reading aloud to the old gentleman, who, giving him little rest in this respect, seemed to have receded mentally into the realm of ancient Greeks and Romans; full of interest in their wars and politics, but indifferent to those of his own day and country. Monimia, gliding through the room at intervals; bringing her sewing over of the ancient garments of an exhausted wardrobe, to sit near them, or stepping out of the back door upon the greensward to comment on his garden work—Monimia, in her blooming youth, sufficed to fill up the measure of all young Lyndsay's other earthly needs!

The old servants, who had grown very fond of their soldier-guest, made his personal comfort their affectionate study. He had been their Providence in the pinch of need. He had shown modesty, kindness, tact, alacrity in their master's service; they, with the unflinching intuition of their kind, recognized in him real gentility and breeding. Nothing less, indeed, would they have accepted as fit for companionship with "the fambly," meaning the Carlyles, root, stem and branches.

Aug. 1905

Therefore, fraught with peril though it was, Lyndsay took such satisfaction in the hour as he had not known during years of his previously starved, uncomprehended life. Sometimes, in the night, he would wake up realizing the folly of that satisfaction. Then he would strive to put his manhood into throwing off the spell. But with daylight and the resumption of the strange, dreamy life in this atmosphere of by-gones, amid musty books and parchments, venerable portraits and servants, and a dry, old, half-cracked scholar—while Mona and the garden made his poetry—he grew content again and ceased to struggle.

Early one morning of mid-April the girl came out before breakfast to where he was utilizing the cool of the day to make a microphylla rose stand up to a sense of its own responsibility and repose its heavy-headed blossoms upon the trellis intended for their support, instead of that belonging to a neighboring honeysuckle.

She felt brighter. Her father seemed better. In a few days she was to be allowed to visit her mother. Finally, the long delayed letter from Lancelot had come the night before. It was good to know that he was well, and she heartily approved of his manly movement to set to work at Foxcroft, instead of living beyond his means at Carlyle Hall. With all her belief in family tradition, Mona's practical eye had begun to see through some of her father's misconceptions.

The town was quiet. It was a breathing space between great sensations. Lyndsay's face, as he turned it upon her, reflected the hopeful light in hers.

"I'm glad you came now," he said, bending over a stalk of Easter lilies. "For I certainly shouldn't have had courage to keep this little fellow imprisoned one minute longer. Late yesterday evening I noticed a humming-bird wavering and buzzing around these blossoms and wondered how he got here so early in the season. Just now I heard a fluttering and smothered chirps, and found that the

calyx of a lily had closed around something living. Shouldn't you like to set him free?"

Mona's eyes gleamed sympathy. Pouncing upon the stalk, she tore apart the petals of the burdened flower. Out and away into the sunshine reeled a tiny ball of green and gold, drunk with honey and sweet smells!

The pretty episode was but the prelude to one of their long, intimate talks—the talks that insensibly to Mona were beginning to remold her life and thoughts. Today, for a wonder, she led the modest youth to discourse of himself and his old belongings. He even found himself pouring forth reminiscences of the rare, fine New England mother, with whom he had lived in hard poverty after his father's untimely death; of her ambitions for him, her continued struggle that he should have education and opportunity; of his fervent love for her that had made theirs an almost perfect intercourse between two souls; of her death and his despair.

Then, after a silence comprehended equally by both, Lyndsay went on to tell of the transfer of his sensitive nature into the keeping of a skinflint uncle, who had quarreled with his father and cast his mother into the gulf of non-recognition while she lived; of the miserable days and years spent in eating the bitter bread of dependence allotted by this hard, begrudging man who valued a young life only in so much as he could adapt it to the service of money-getting.

The college course, begrudgingly allowed him—every dollar it cost doled out with rebuke—not a penny for opportunities to mingle socially with his own kind—was, nevertheless, Lyndsay's salvation. It opened new horizons, gave him rewards and friendships won for himself by himself, and put new hope into his future. He had come through it with credit to face the outbreaking of the war.

And after that another wretched time of submission to his uncle's bitter exaction that he should settle down in the mill office to pay back, through

service, the outlay for his education—months during which he "shut his jaw," and bore what he could not help—and finally, his break for freedom and conviction when he became a private in the ranks of the Union army.

Mona had not conceived it possible that she would listen with such varying emotions of sympathy and interest to the tale of a life in political sympathy so far apart from hers. She actually felt a desire, curiously detached from her view of the triumph of Union arms, that the new greatness of the united country might, in its wake, bring him compensation and success.

"After all," she said musingly, having in mind the hints Claxton had given her of Lyndsay's promotion, "you will soon go forward. The world's all before you. You're on the conquering side. Before long you'll be able to accomplish whatever you lay out for yourself. You will forget your past in the splendid future."

"I don't want to forget it," he answered. "It would be a poor stick of a man who would put out of mind the strong formative influences of his career, no matter what wounds they had inflicted. And when I think what it's all led to, latterly, the opening out of my mind, the softening of antagonisms, the right understanding of this break between brothers, above all, my knowing you and your father— Oh, no, Miss Carlyle, don't wish that for me, ever!"

He spoke with fervor, holding trailed over his arm a loosened vine covered with large roses, that might have been carved from Carrara marble. His eyes kindled as he looked down upon the slender figure in the garden-seat, clad in its desperately worn-out frock that smelt of the washtub and sweet lavender. The great hazel eyes, in which tears seemed to lurk when smiles were not driving them away, the curved bow of her red mouth, the warm ivory of her skin, stained on the cheeks with rose-color, never seemed so near to him, so perfectly appealing.

"Yes, you'll have the best of things," she said, with a little sigh of envy.

"I feel as if for years I and mine must sit in the shadows and dream of what might have been. And life doesn't go out because one's worsted in honest fight, does it? One aspires just the same and longs to be up and doing. Ah, well! we Southerners must dree our weird. If ever you are back in Virginia, Mr. Lyndsay, when these dreadful days are further in the past, you'll not forget to come and tell us how life has gone with you?"

"Forget?" he exclaimed hotly. "Could you ever think——?"

He stopped, putting rein upon himself.

"If it's a year from now that you come back," she went on guilelessly, "we mayn't be living in this house. My father already talks of letting it and removing to the country. But in any case," she added, with a slight blush, "there are likely to be changes."

"Changes?" he echoed, his voice flattening in spite of himself.

"There has been no one to tell you of—of something about me, because we haven't any mutual friends. But I thought I should like to have you know it from myself. It had always been planned between my cousin's father and mine——"

Lyndsay turned the wide gaze of his blue eyes upon her, a deep flush coming upon his face, his lips twitching.

"Yes—you mean that it is intended that you should——?"

"Marry my cousin, Lancelot Carlyle, whom my parents love better than anyone since we've lost our darling Harry. Lance is to come back soon. We have been expecting him every day. He will certainly thank you kindly for being what you have to us. He is one of the noblest, truest men in the world, I think."

Lyndsay lifted the rose-vine into its place and secured it beyond the peradventure of another escapade.

"I am getting very anxious for him to come," she went on, confidentially matter-of-fact. "He will know so much better than anyone what to do for my father. Today our lawyer called about something very impor-

tant, and there was no one who could talk to him. He said he hoped, in our interest, that Colonel Carlyle would very soon be here. And then, Lance is so gay, so cheery. The whole house is enlivened when he comes into it."

"You have not heard from him since the surrender?"

"Yes; it has just come—a letter, all blurred and soiled, as if it had lain in somebody's pocket before falling into water—days behind time! He was going to look after some business of his own in —— County, and would then start back to Richmond. Of course, he had not heard of my father's unhappy condition since the occupation, or Lance would have come at once."

"Of course," was all that Private Lyndsay found to say. His brain was in a turmoil of mortification and disappointment. Although perfectly well aware that he had not a ghost of a chance with her, this conversation showing him indubitably that Mona had not considered him save in the actual light in which he stood, the pain was there—vivid, ineradicable. And this Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, this blot upon Lyndsay's sun, why had he never before dreamed of his true relation to the fair Mona? Lyndsay knew all else there was to know about the family hero, thanks to the proud prattle of old Britannicus, who had dressed the image of "Marse Lance" in purple and fine linen, and raised it upon a pinnacle for Lyndsay to admire; but he had not thought of this intolerable thing.

The plague of it was that nobody could deny the engagement to be a suitable and obvious one. Third cousins—a mere nothing in Virginia, as far as it meant an obstacle to marriage. Two great properties adjoining—so Britannicus had said!—an old historic name, an ancient, stately lineage, the expected bridegroom possessing wealth in abundance—so said Britannicus!—to build up any waste of war!

For the Carlyle factotum, like most of his kind, possessed the virtues and

failings of a Caleb Balderstone. His pride, bleeding at the monetary straits to which the family had been recently reduced, had cast about for every means of reasserting itself in the eyes of their benefactors. True, Britannicus recognized that among gentlefolk of the same social status, like his "ole Marse" and Colonel Claxton, a loan of money was a mere temporary accommodation, to be repaid at convenience. The negro had kept a strict account of every penny's worth expended from the colonel's purse through Private Lyndsay, meaning to refer it for settlement to Colonel Lancelot so soon as he should return. In the interim Britannicus strove zealously and lied righteously—according to his lights—to hide the reality from his master and "young miss," neither of whom had ever been accustomed to know in detail how the household was supplied. Since the patient and striving mistress of the house, who had worn herself out in saving them this knowledge, had been laid low, it had been Britannicus and Phœbe who had pinched and planned during those days when, as was said, the blue-backed bank-notes were taken in the market basket to be exchanged for supplies that a portemonnaie would hold! Everybody always knew it was useless to approach "ole Marse" about sordid household necessities. And now Britannicus saw, with a sad heart, the mental collapse of that brilliant, impatient victim of exploded hopes. And as to "little miss," "why, bless the child, she'd bust her sweet little heart if she knowed where the money come from." The one consolation Britannicus took to himself, as a leading deacon in his church, self-convicted of deliberate deceit, was that Colonel Claxton had smilingly threatened to knock his old head off if he ever, in this connection, told the truth!

Yes! Lyndsay was well aware of Lancelot's superior claims in this dwelling which he himself held by so frail a tenure! He had recognized that when the young colonel turned up

again his planet must pale its feeble beams and go out in obscurity. He knew also that in the natural order of things he would soon get his summons to go back to Washington and be mustered out of service with the rest of the volunteers. Then war and its memories would be merged into toil for daily bread. Lyndsay would be forgotten by these Virginians, bound together in a close corporation by heredity and interest. It was the blindest folly for him to indulge in emotions like these now choking his utterance, and making rebellion against necessity run hot in his veins.

But—he could not hide from himself what inspired this lava stream of feeling. It was love for Mona and jealousy of her cousin! Abruptly he threw down his gardening tools, went into the house, told Britannicus he did not want any breakfast and stepped out into the street.

The hour was still early, their quarter a little off the general line of news, but Lyndsay had not gone half a square when he met someone who told him of what had happened at Ford's Theatre in Washington the night before.

After that he did not care to see Mona or any of them for a while.

During the afternoon a note came to Mr. Carlyle from Colonel Claxton, informing him that he was leaving Richmond, and must, to his regret, withdraw from their household young Lyndsay, who had that day got his promotion to second lieutenant, and was ordered at once to Washington. Claxton hoped, however, that in view of Colonel Lancelot Carlyle's early return, Lyndsay's services would soon be replaced to them, and assured his old friend that he would expect to see him again at no very distant date, begging his kindest regards to the ladies of the family.

Claxton did not say that he had made it his business before leaving to seek out Mr. Carlyle's lawyer and have, with that reluctant gentleman, a transaction insuring the financial comfort of the stricken family until

their affairs could be straightened out. Mr. Chester did not, indeed, give Claxton much hope of this latter desirable result; but in spite of his evident unwillingness to receive aid for his clients from such a source, Mr. Chester could not see his way clear to refusing it.

"When young Carlyle comes back," the good gentleman had said finally, "I will submit the whole affair for settlement to him. In the interim—" He hemmed, colored, was silent, and Colonel Claxton rejoiced that he had triumphed over Mr. Chester. He could not have reconciled it to his sense of decency to go away and leave this duty unaccomplished. But now that a new chasm had suddenly opened between the two sections, in the new bitterness that must arise, he deemed it wisest not to see any of the Carlyles for the present.

It was different with young Lyndsay. His whole being was filled with the horror of the national disaster and with passionate lamenting for the dead. It dimmed the satisfaction of his promotion, and for the time being acted as a prompt corrective of his unfortunate sentiment for Mona. He returned to the Carlyles' house late that evening to take leave of them, and already Mona, standing behind her father's chair in the crepuscular library, seemed to have receded out of his vision of possibilities; and perhaps the largeness of his nature had suddenly contracted in a bitterness that shut her out. He could not tell. He took leave of the family, as he had previously done of the servants, who were loud in their outcries of regret, and of the flowers who flaunted, unfeelingly, their brightest bloom.

Before Lyndsay could leave the hall Mona had followed him, arrested his progress, and turned upon him a gaze full of radiant feeling.

"I can't let you go this way, Mr. Lyndsay," she said very gently. "I don't think my father fully understood, or he would have said more. Will you let me say for both of us how glad I am you have your promotion—how glad

we shall always be to hear of the better things that will surely come to you? Good-bye! My father will miss you, the garden will miss you—and I——"

For a second her eyes held him.

"And you?" he asked in a hoarse whisper, his cheeks suddenly red-hot.

She drew back a little. Her voice seemed to be far distant.

"You know what you've been to me. Some day it will seem easier than now to show my gratitude——"

"There can be no gratitude from you to me," he said.

"But I feel it—tremendously. So will my Cousin Lancelot. He will——"

"Allow me to say good-bye," said the young man, interrupting her almost rudely.

With exceeding suddenness he was gone. Accustomed although she was to this species of military farewell, when the soldier is directly afterward lost to sight behind intervening mists, Mona felt a dull sense of rebellion against Fate. Yankee or no Yankee, they had been so happy in each other's company. Who, of all the men she knew, could exactly take Lyndsay's place? Feeling a strong desire for sympathy in his departure, she tried to talk to her father of their bereavement, but Alexius was absorbed in a grievance against the cook, who had omitted to add a *soupeon* of onion to a certain sauce.

"If all the 'other side' were like him, papa," she said persistently, "I think it would not be long before the breach was healed."

"Onion, my dear, is as indispensable to cookery as a sense of humor is to a woman. Garlic, now, must be handled on the banks of the Seine—it was the Crusaders, I believe, who first brought garlic from Ascalon. I wish that young fellow, Lyndsay, would be more punctual. I have been waiting some time to have him finish this thing of Ovid. What? You say he is gone? Gone away from town? Impossible. Most inconsiderate to me! And Lance hasn't yet said when he will arrive? Well, thank goodness, when Lance

comes back, I shall no longer depend upon aliens."

"When Lance comes back." That, now, was the burden of everybody's cry! Old Alexius, missing Lyndsay acutely, unwilling to admit it, impatient with Mona because she couldn't fill his need, made it his daily song. Sadly his daughter and Britannicus saw that he had become as a fretful child, taxing them to the utmost to meet his whims.

The doctor, to whom they appealed for advice, was at his wit's end. It was his desire to send Mona to her cousin's in the country to cheer the slow advance of his other patient. But the condition of Mr. Carlyle called imperatively for the companionship of a member of his own family. A tough old rebel and state-rights man dyed in the wool, their doctor was also too tender of heart not to regret for them the loss of the young Yankee guard who had proved such a mainstay to his afflicted friends. "But when Lance comes," echoed he, "things will certainly look up for the Carlyles."

Thus every voice swelled the refrain. A second letter from Lancelot announced that he was getting his small establishment at Foxcroft under way, had been able to hire a few laborers and was starting in with such crops as were immediately practicable, after which he would run down to Richmond and make his report in person. It cheered Mona visibly and reacted upon the household. The prospect of his actual return heartened everybody. Mona, in answering, threw *couleur de rose* around their circumstances, telling nothing of her father's state. All waited and hoped for Lance like the Jews for Moses.

In the midst of their uncertainty, when May had brought withering summer heats, came astounding news from Washington. It was announced there in the daily papers, and flashed over the wires to Richmond, that Lieutenant-Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, late of the rebel service, had been arrested at his home in — County, Virginia, upon a

charge of traitorous conspiracy against the Government of the United States, and was consigned to the old Capitol Prison in Washington.

VII

THE old Capitol Prison in the rear of the National Capitol, near where the stately Library of Congress now rears its golden dome, had, in the early days of Washington, been part of a series of fine private residences, subsequently occupied as boarding-houses and lodgings by Congressmen. Following the burning of the Capitol by the British in the War of 1812, these buildings were used by both Houses of Congress for the purposes of meeting and debate. After the Civil War they were again converted into separate dwellings and occupied by private citizens.

To this place Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, carried under close guard to Washington, and unable to communicate with friends, was first assigned as a prisoner of State.

He had been arrested without warning while in the field at Foxcroft, following the harmless course of a plow driven by his own day laborer; thus loyally carrying out not only the expressed wish of the successful powers, but that of the manly chieftain of the beaten army.

They had given him no opportunity for protestation or defense. The car of Juggernaut had rolled over him in silence. But he had been already aware that dark suspicion had fallen upon him in his neighborhood. The second encounter with the loafers at the crossroads grocery had gone far to confirm his first impressions of their disfavor in his direction. He had otherwise seen that the Union element in this sparse, half-deserted and resettled region was generally against him; and, shrugging his shoulders, had resigned himself philosophically to keep out of their way and attend to his own affairs.

During this time he had taken in for the night a wandering soldier of Lee's army, a giant scarecrow, strayed

thither in the hope of getting a start through a relative of his, a small land-owner, who had moved away to the West, leaving him without resource. The newcomer, by name Jerry Trimble, at first fed and warmed like a homeless dog, proved to be possessed of a modest agricultural experience dating from before the war. His hints and help, in the desire to show gratitude and be of use, had led Lance to impose in him some confidence. When the bolt fell from the blue that was to snatch the master of Foxcroft indefinitely from his home, Jerry, divided between his custom of calmly shooting down opponents who took him by surprise and obedience to his employer, took charge of the house and farm. Mars and Dilsey, between tears and prayers, promised to remain under Jerry's direction with the other "hands" whom Lance had engaged, until the mistake of their master's arrest should be rectified by authority.

In his heart Lance did not doubt that the business that had brought Cecil Dare to Foxcroft was the source of his new and most serious trouble. The Dares were not mentioned in the course of the brief interrogatory vouchsafed him by his captors. After the first tumult of his resentment had subsided Lance, in his prison chamber at Washington, although still stunned and confused by the signal disaster, found himself going over and trying to sift out all that he knew about the Dares, now become the important factor in his future. For he saw plainly that in the excited state of the public mind he had little to hope in the way of clemency from the Government unless he could disprove the charges that had been preferred against him. And this he could only do by exposing Cecil Dare.

From the very first he had set the girl apart from her family, and the instinct of sympathy and protection increased in him as he thought of her. It was the mother who had teased his curiosity. Who was she? What had inspired an inconspicuous matron to take the leading part in so black a project? Then he had questioned old Mars,

to be told that "Mrs. Dare was a mighty sperety lady," whose reckless tongue and violent temper had been a tradition in the neighborhood "befo' de wah." That she adored her son, a wild young blade, who had "given his ma and pa lots o' trouble first and last," and cared very little for the young lady, who had been packed away South to boarding-school when the family went "refugeeing down in Virginny." That the "old gentleman was putty well wore out with the mad-am's pranks befo' he died, they say," and Mars had "heard tell" Mrs. Dare had "cut up some mighty shines sence, carryin' despatches for rebel generals."

Going over every item of this rambling talk with his old servitor, Lance now tried vainly to identify in Cecil's mother any one of the more celebrated "secret service" women of the South. He wondered for a moment if it could have been she who had actually won for the South the first battle of Manassas, recalling the story as it had been told to him over a drumhead dinner by a young aide-de-camp of Beauregard.

Before July 18, 1861, public expectation on both sides of the Potomac was at fever heat. While General Scott and his lieutenants were incessantly urged by their Government and goaded by the Northern press to move on to Richmond, it would be wired today from Washington, "Tomorrow we shall move," and on the morrow would go forth, "Advance delayed for a week of necessary preparation."

For the South, at that critical juncture, a supreme necessity existed for concentration at the final moment before McDowell could be reinforced by Paterson. In the meantime her brigades must be kept widely distributed; General Johnston near Martinsburg, General Bonham at Fairfax Court House, General Holmes on the Potomac near Eastport. Even if they assembled, these forces would be greatly outnumbered by General McDowell's single column. All depended upon a certainty of the intention of the foe and of the date of their advance.

To General Beauregard at Manassas a messenger, riding in hot haste, brought down the Potomac on the Maryland side—crossing the river near Dumfries, and reaching the gallant leader's tent at exactly the critical instant—a note in these words:

McDowell has certainly been ordered to advance on the seventeenth.

The initials signing this fateful missive were well known to Beauregard; the handwriting was recognized, the statement accepted. General Bonham, pulled behind the line of Bull Run, barely escaped his pursuers, who, at noon on the seventeenth, passed through what had been his camp. Holmes was brought up on the right; Johnston called down from before Paterson, to arrive in the very nick of time during the battle of the twenty-first. The unexpected appearance of his men, throwing McDowell's right into confusion, resulted in the complete panic and rout of the Union army!

And a woman's touch it was that had set this pendulum of a nation's fate a-swing—a woman in Washington who had gained her information through the unsuspectingness of an officer of standing and high record in the army; a woman of birth and refinement, of excellent social place. Suddenly Lance remembered her name—no, that was certainly not “Mrs. Dare”!

He walked to and fro, thought again, then uttered an exclamation. Another tale had flashed back to memory of a woman's even more daring intermeddling with military affairs in the second year of the war; a tale of sharp risks, of a wild ride by midnight into the teeth of a hostile camp, of information gained that led to success astonishing. How could he have forgotten what men who had seen her had told of the appearance of the famous “Molly Ball,” slim, graceful, girlish, dark, vivid—afterward renowned as a spy in the employ of the Confederate Government. Lance decried his previous stupidity. The description of

Molly Ball fit Cecil's mother like a glove.

Molly Ball! She who knew not fear, nor held back from any venture. Cool, calculating, invulnerable to the ordinary weaknesses of women—considering nothing that remained in the path of accomplishing her schemes. She, who had stood unmoved beneath the tree upon which a fellow-spy was hanged, and had escaped by a clever trick when they were in the act of conveying her to a Northern dungeon! She, Cecil's mother!

And for this abnormal woman and her worthless son Lancelot Carlyle was incarcerated, evidently implicated in one of the mad plots to burn, raid, despoil or abduct leaders on the Federal side proposed by free-lances to the Government in Richmond and decried by all fair-minded Southerners!

Once persuaded of what he was believed to be Lance did not disguise from himself the near peril of an ignominious fate. Public opinion just then was like tinder ready for the spark. Appearances were against him, and there would be few to consider his case favorably even if he could ever tell the truth.

The thought of those good people in Richmond hearing what would be charged to his account cut like a knife. But they would trust him, stand by him to the death; his old comrades would want to band together and begin a new war to snatch him from what threatened. The whole South would believe in him, he knew—upon which reflection he laughed aloud at the flatteries of a clear conscience!

Ah! well, whatever others thought of him, he was secure of his own manhood—and in that knowledge would possess his soul.

One afternoon shortly after his arrival in Washington he was abruptly called out by a detective and conducted to a room in the prison building under the pretext of visiting “a Confederate lady whom he might find it agreeable to meet.” Lance knew, with the instinct of a savage who takes heed of a

dropping nut or a breaking bough, that he had better be on his guard. When his eye fell upon the oldish, slatternly woman—afterward identified as one of those odious appendages of warfare, a double spy—Union woman in Washington, Confederate in Richmond—to whom he was introduced by the detective with an affectation of offhand cordiality, he read her true character with loathing, and resolved to let not a word escape him that he might regret.

The woman—Mrs. Anstey, they called her—abounded in kind and sympathetic words. She did not name the young girl who, deadly pale, with a white cloth bound across her brow, stood in the background, revealing a profile that struck him in its resemblance to some face on a Roman coin—nor otherwise allude to the girl's identity, except to say that she was the child of an old friend in distress; was suffering from a bad headache, and that Mrs. Anstey, in her plain way, was trying to cheer her up.

In spite of Mrs. Anstey's smooth protestations, her continual smiles, Carlyle felt that the poor girl had been brought there for the same crafty purpose as himself. It was designed that they should meet and talk unguardedly in the hearing of a spy. An impulse of sympathy led him, nevertheless, to address to the young woman a passing word of kindness. With a wan effort at cheerfulness the stranger answered, and, for a while, the three talked on, each affecting indifference, even merriment; each concealing a world of resolute purpose; the detective always listening.

It was not until they were leaving the room that Carlyle heard this man call the young girl Miss Surratt.

He came away from the interview knowing that he had escaped a trap. After the disgust of it, his prison dormitory, with its rough comrades, seemed a welcome haven. He prayed God this might be the last time he was to touch such materials of justice!

It was the next day when all the rebel prisoners in the old Capitol

swarmed to their window bars to see Sherman's imperial pageant of return.

A touch upon Lancelot Carlyle's shoulder wheeled him around from the window to confront a new detective, who curtly told him he was to go to "another place." In the prison chamber around him there was an immediate cessation of animated talk. His companions watched the colonel depart with awe rather than envy. They surrounded him with handshakes and kind words. The report had gotten abroad among them that he was to be dealt with according to the full rigor of the law.

A drive in an ambulance—the war-time chariot that served for all military purposes of transfer—brought him to the United States Arsenal, situated upon a peninsula of land running out from the marshy borders of the eastern branch of the Potomac, now the site of the War College of coming generations. It contained a group of brick dwellings, close to the water's edge, amid level military plazas, whereon were banked pyramids of shells and balls, surrounded by bristling cannon, their carriages and caissons. Over by a high, grim wall towered conspicuously a somber building, with barred and grated windows. Old Washingtonians knew the dismal structure as a district penitentiary. In the second year of the war its use for this purpose had been discontinued, the military authorities desiring to utilize it in conjunction with the operations of the Government Arsenal, and it had been now transformed into a Court of Justice, where, in the third or upper story, was sitting a Military Commission whose proceedings filled the civilized world with awesome interest. For in those lugubrious inner cells were confined the prisoners implicated in the assassination of President Lincoln, and others accused of similar intended crime. On every one of these piping days of June the hapless conspirators had been brought out in irons through a massive, nail-studded door communicating with the cells, and placed in a line punctuated with armed guards,

to sit in this courtroom facing their judges and a motley audience till the end of the day's session, when they were returned to their dungeons.

It had become a modish thing for society to drop in at the Arsenal and "get a glimpse of the trial." The passes, limited to the capacity of the hall, were as much in demand as opera tickets for a special performance. The broad, dusty avenue, with its shabby fringes of negro huts and petty shops leading up to the entrance gate, resembled the approach to a county fair.

The ambulance containing Carlyle and his guard was several times superseded in the line of arrival before the gate by the barouches of smart people, the women dressed as for a race day, chatting in high glee with their military escorts. One after another of these parties passed laughing in under the shadow of the great wall, whereon a line of patrols, ten feet apart, kept perpetually astir.

After passing the officer of the day Carlyle found himself conducted up several flights of crooked stairs and ushered without warning directly into the oblong, whitewashed hall where the trial was going on.

His face flushed with quick indignation when, with the curt explanation that they were to await there the Provost Marshal-General, to whose custody the prisoner was consigned, the guide bade Carlyle stand where he was, facing the whole assemblage.

A memorable sight, withal!

There were present, in suffocating heat, the Judge Advocate-General, with his swart, cold face, boding ill for any prisoner falling under his displeasure; his assistants, the Judges of the Military Commission, unfortunately for themselves, appointed to conduct this trial; the reporters of the Commission; the large, indifferent audience, and the accused—seven men and one woman, shackled—together with their counsel. At once the attention of the lookers-on, jaded by the monotony of long drawn-out testimony and rebuttal, was diverted to the spectacle of a

new prisoner, handsome, manly, bearing himself with the cool courage of a gentleman. It was, for the women especially, a pleasant exchange from the survey of those depressing beings in handcuffs forever sitting in a row waiting to hear their doom.

Carlyle stood proudly, impassively, his lips set, his gaze fixed straight before him into space, the sense of indignity continuing to rouse hot anger in his veins. He could see heads nodding together to get a better look at him, lorgnons raised as if to inspect the most recently captured beast of prey. And when at last relieved from the ordeal by the arrival of the Provost Marshal to take official possession of his body, he was again led out of the courtroom, their progress was blocked by a vulgar, gaping crowd, who, whispering awe struck as they gazed, when the prisoner turned, fell away, huddling together as if from a monster ill secured.

A surge of impotent fury banished reason from the young man's brain. For the first time he resented Cecil Dare and all her works, just as he had hated the fine clothes of the staring women in the audience, and the gilt stars and orange sashes of their attendants. He felt like a bull at bay in the ring, keen to do mischief somewhere.

Between the moment of their leaving the court and a pause in the corridor, during which the general went in search of a certain necessary key, a man and a woman pushed out of the crowded hall, supporting between them a fainting girl, coming to a halt directly behind the prisoner.

At that epoch of sharp emotion, constantly aroused, the incident produced in the throng but a passing ripple of notice. Himself in no mood for sympathy, Carlyle did not even turn to glance at the sufferer so near him. He was grimly swallowing his wrath when a jostle in the crowd of new gazers brought a soft touch upon his arm and an anguished voice breathed into his ear:

"Always I shall watch and work for you."

His heart bounded, but he dared not turn. At the same moment his jailer reappeared carrying a formidable key. His band of vagabond followers uttered a long drawn sigh of satisfaction, keeping at the tail of the little procession as the general strode ahead, the prisoner next, the guard bringing up the rear. Descending steps and threading passages, they came finally to a halt before a grating that blocked the corridor, where the key, inserted in an iron door, and the prisoner ushered within, induced the baffled sensation seekers to fall back and scatter. The door crashed to! Life was over for a while, thought Lance. But above the sound of vulgar whispers and titters and clanging iron and pattering, eager feet he heard always that thrilling promise in the voice of Cecil Dare, "Always I shall watch and work for you." It went with him into the felon's cell, with cemented walls and floor, barren of furnishing save for a blanket tossed into one corner, as dark by day as by night, wherein he was to spend four weeks, forbidden speech with anyone. The thought that she had suffered with him in his hour of humiliation warmed his sad heart and nerved him for all endurance. During the days and nights while he alternately lay upon the floor or walked or stood stretching his muscles in the hope to save strength and reason, he thought of her continually.

Twice a day the prisoner was inspected by the Provost Marshal and the surgeon of the prison to keep note of the endurance of his strength. To these officials it was a source of avowed astonishment that they had from him no more complaint than from a red Indian at the stake, and that he preserved a cheerful, half-satiric attitude in meeting all requisitions.

Lancelot Carlyle thanked God that, a strong mind aiding a conscience void of offense, he had shown no sign of weakening. But the month, wearing to an end, so told upon the physical part of him that at last, with the return of one morning, he could hardly muster force to rise and stand. When his chief jailer and the doctor called

they found his pulse a mere thread, his general condition one of extreme exhaustion, his voice hardly audible. The doctor asked if he had anything he wished to say.

"Only that you see my strength is gone," was the answer, "and if it isn't intended for me to die under this treatment I must have a change."

The doctor, assenting frankly, appealed to the general. The general carried the matter to the War Department, and permission was that same day given for the prisoner to take regular exercise in the prison-yard below. A tottering old man it was whom they turned blinking into the sunlight! When they bade him walk his legs refused their office, and he stopped. An official, dressed in brief authority, came up, demanding what they had sent him there to do.

"To get exercise," was the obvious answer.

"Then why don't you move on?"

"Simply because I can't walk."

"Take him in," ordered the man contemptuously.

Up the long stairs again, hardly able to drag his feet; away from the brief glimpse of blue sky, the bare taste of fresh air; back into the black cell! Exhausted, he dropped upon the floor of it. That, clearly, was the only spot where he had a right to be.

Lancelot wondered if he, limp and weary of spirit, were the same man who had ridden so often into battle and faced bullets with such unconcern, taking the soldier's chance, feeling strong and gay and free! He knew that if he gave up now to this miserable sense of physical malaise he was gone. Putting a stout rein upon his spirit, he willed it to rise and soar, and was obeyed.

This time the order for exercise was accompanied by another, a joyful one. He was to be removed to a light cell. The transfer, effected promptly, resulted in a room facing toward the Capitol, into which summer daylight came through a window in the prison wall opposite. He could even see the great dome glittering afar and a glimpse of the avenue that led up to it!

With daily exercise in the yard came returning health and an even mental poise.

Carlyle had crying need of this at the present epoch of his imprisonment. Although the world around him was still virtually a blank as far as information went, intuition told him that within the broad walls where the sentries passed forever up and down was then enacting a drama strange and awful, at which all humanity was looking on aghast.

His wits, sharpened by solitude and cultivated by close observation of minute detail, kept him actually almost abreast of the gruesome happenings of the hour. He knew nothing of any single one of the people under trial; he might have lived on to the natural end of his days without meeting one of them. He had no bias in their direction, no sentimental wish that the course of justice might be averted from them. Once while in the yard he had seen at a window of the prison the wan face of the girl met in the spy's room at the old Capitol and had taken his hat off to her in common sympathy with the most crushed and sorrow-stricken creature that had ever met his gaze—a fact noted to his discredit.

Another time, speculating continually as he walked upon his beat, he managed to pick up unseen and secrete a piece of torn and greasy newspaper, blown away from around the luncheon of some petty officer or guard.

The paved spaces of the inclosure beneath the wall were, in the parching summer heat, daily used by officials as a lounging-place, where, in the shadow of the great fifteen-foot wall, topped by sentry-boxes and patrolled by men carrying loaded muskets, they would sit and smoke, jest, eat fruit and take their ease.

When the sun, gradually pursuing them into their retreat of shade, routed and dispersed the loiterers, there sometimes remained in the yard only the prisoner, walking in all weather up and down the path worn for himself in the grass; his guard, and the blue-coated watchers on the walls.

It was thus, through a momentary evasion of vigilance, that he managed to supply to himself certain missing links of the chain of historic events forging so near to him.

The contents of the bit of newspaper, eagerly devoured in secret, left him no room to doubt that the conspirators on trial were hurrying to their doom. He saw also that vengeance in the North was still unsated in the public mind, and would not be until this was accomplished.

No charge, to his knowledge, had ever been made against him officially. He had no idea of what fate awaited him. He had only to strengthen his stout heart the knowledge of clean hands.

A few days later he was removed, with other prisoners, to Fort Delaware.

VIII

A SEPTEMBER night in Richmond! Dusk had fallen, but with it came no surcease of scorching heat. The air remained stifling till dawn came again, and burning pavements sent up torrid waves into a white-hot firmament.

Mona had a hammock swung for her father between two trees in the garden, and a low sewing-chair carried out upon the greensward for herself. While the old man napped and started fitfully she sat under the starlight thinking of many things. The air was stagnant with rich, sweet odors from incense-bearing flowers, and she longed for some wood nook fragrant only with the wholesome scent of tiny blossoms growing close to earth; or, better still, a reach of seashore, with green-arched breakers dashing their foam upon it. Anything for a breath of life-giving ozone, anything to make a change from this haunt of perpetual sad thought!

As always, the remembrance of poor Lance, still a prisoner—Lance, knowing nothing of their fresh sorrow in her mother's death and of the forced sale of the plantation to provide for them a living—Lance, over whose head hung dark, inexplicable clouds—silenced her

complaining. The long separation from her cousin, under these tragic circumstances, had led Mona's affections to cluster around him more closely. But she still could not tell where the old, accustomed feeling for him ended and that for an affianced husband began. She only knew that his condition excited her tenderest, most continuing sympathy. All of her poor little efforts to communicate with the prisoner had failed. The newspapers had announced his transfer to a Northern fortress. Her heart was sore at thought of her utter helplessness to comfort him.

Through the shadows of the grape-vine walk old Britannicus came shuffling out from the back door. His own present prosperity of circumstance, since Miss Mona had risen to a comprehension of their affairs and had taken the reins of government into an exceedingly small pair of hands, ought to have keyed his spirit to exalted cheer. For, some time since, Mona had informed the old servant that she could no longer afford to keep the full services of Phoebe and himself, and had forced on them the option of finding paid employment elsewhere, leaving their evenings free for the service of "the fambly." Phoebe, with tears, had compromised by remaining where she was, furnishing bread and rolls and cake to a mess of Federal officers keeping house nearby, whose dollars were piling up fast in the stocking in her chest, even after deducting the cost of the best materials. Britannicus and his wife were now, indeed, better off than many white folks around them, and he had signalized his first accession of wealth by buying back, at an exorbitant advance, the flowered waistcoat from old Sol Taliaferro!

Mammy Clary, her task to her dearest mistress ended, had returned to serve "old Marse" and Miss Mona with or without pay, so long as the breath was in her body, and they did not cast her off. The other servants had been requested to find themselves places, and were "hired out" with people of means, upon whom they secretly looked down, each negro taking the surname of Car-

lyle, and fancying him or herself an exiled scion of a royal house.

In the evening, upon returning to the house, Britannicus would resume his jacket of snow-white linen, the well-starched shirt and collar, the white tie, long worn in his master's service; would brush his silver curls to stand in a halo around his bald, black crown, and, after setting the table with a full outfit of damask and china and silver, stand monumentally behind Mr. Carlyle's chair. The old servant chose to ignore the fact that his former owner was now a limp and aged child, held in place by cushions, fretful, capricious, at times letting fly his old arrows of sarcastic speech, but whimpering if the food were denied him for which he improperly appealed—or again sitting throughout a meal in moody silence. Britannicus had adjured Miss Mona not to let Marse see they thought him changed a teeny weeny bit; and Mona desolately kept up the farce.

Now in the garden, in the evening light, Mona could see that the butler wore a look of unwonted animation, that a new impulse quickened his gouty feet toward her.

"It's company, little miss," he said in an explanatory whisper, not to disturb the whistling doze of old Marse in the hammock. "An' I said I'd jest see if you was at home."

"I am not apt to be far away," she answered, smiling sadly, but a little stirred by comforting curiosity. "Who is it?"

"You'd sartinly never believe it, little miss, to see him in them stylish city clothes—a real, first-chop gentleman, whatever he has on—it's Mr. Lyndsay, miss, and if you'll allow him to step out here, he won't disturb you to come into the house."

"Mr. Lyndsay!" she exclaimed, with a sudden invasion of pleasure and relief. He was the last person she expected to see, although the brief lines she had written him to announce her mother's death had been answered by the kind of sympathy the more felt because so much is left unsaid. She should always associate him with her

keenest trials, when his ministry to her mother had been like a son's. Time, as it went on, had but showed her how faithful, unselfish, spontaneous his friendship for them had been.

"Of course, beg him to come to us here," she added, and shortly the servant returned, ushering the unwonted figure of Lyndsay in the garb of an ordinary citizen.

Mona made a few quick steps to meet him, putting her hand confidently in his. As she smiled a welcome, tears overcame her speech. The young man stood silently, glad himself not to have to speak. Britannicus brought out another chair, creating a fortunate diversion. The two young people sat down near the hammock, from which no stir of awakening came.

Over their heads soared the tall magnolias, their stately tops seeming tangled in the stars. The moon was yet to rise, and a swarm of fireflies flitted among flowers and shrubs that sent up an almost sickening fragrance, wafted in gusts to the two sitting with their feet in the hot, dry grass. But to Mona a fresh breeze seemed to have come into the garden and caressed her face.

Although she saw him indistinctly, she was struck with his changed air. He looked freer, more sure of himself, and spoke confidently.

"You have just come from Washington?" she said, when she could command her voice.

"Two weeks ago I was there, still working for my appointment in the regular army. Suddenly something rather important occurred that called me to Massachusetts. Since then I've been in New Jersey doing a bit of 'underground' business; rather out of my line, certainly, but I considered the end justified the means, which were harmless enough. It was a little errand for you, Miss Carlyle."

"For me—an errand—what can you mean?"

"This will explain it," he said, putting a letter into her hand. "The contents are purely personal, or I could not have been its bearer."

"From Lance?" She uttered a little

broken cry of joy. It stirred Alexius, who called out in a childish tone:

"How often must I say, Mona, that I desire my port wine sangaree and a slice of thin bread and butter to be served before the hour for retiring? It must be past the time."

"Yes, papa, in one moment," she said, clasping the precious letter between throbbing hands, fearful the glad beating of her heart would make itself audible.

"And mind you, see that the bread is cut not thicker than a sheet of paper. I've often wondered if Werther's Charlotte attained excellence in that line through practice."

"Papa," said Monimia, "here is someone who has come to see us. Aren't you glad to have Mr. Lyndsay back?"

"Lyndsay? Lyndsay? The young Yan—I beg your pardon, Mr. Lyndsay, you will not expect me to get up. I've been a little under the weather. If quite convenient, we will take up the passage in Ovid, where—Mona, child, tell them to bring lamps. It is getting too dark to read."

Mona disappeared into the house. Very kindly and gently Lyndsay settled the old man back into his hammock, and, as if they had parted but the day before, talked to him of the books they both loved. When Britannicus came out with his master's nightcap of sangaree, and aided the tottering limbs to find their way bedward, Lyndsay remained where he was, profoundly sad.

A brief talk with Britannicus had put him in possession of the Carlyles' present position. The butler had at first tried to carry things off as if the episode of the young soldier's helping to feed "the fambly" at starving point were several centuries ago. He was also eager to inform Marse Lyndsay that Miss Mona had reimbursed Colonel Claxton for the moneys passing through Lyndsay's hand, as well as to convey to the young man the fact that they were now again living upon their own private income, hoping devoutly to suppress the sale of the manor be-

longing to the Carlyles since the days of good Queen Anne.

When, therefore, after the negro had sketchily contrived to let Lyndsay know their debt to Claxton had been acquitted, and that Miss Mona, showing a surprising zeal for business, had been "all over her father's affairs with the lawyers," so that "the fambly" were once more upon the drawing-income-and-doing-nothing-to-earn-it basis, which Britannicus considered indispensable to old gentility, he was a little piqued to find that he had apparently missed his point.

"Tell me, old man," Lyndsay interrupted him, almost brutally, "is it true Mr. Carlyle had to sell the manor for an absurdly small sum to a Northern man, who threatens to cut the timber?"

"Ahem! It would seem, Mr. Lyndsay, sir, that my master *has* felt called upon to part with a certain portion of his property," the negro answered, with a gulp. "An' we are told the—ah—pusson—that bought it is from the Nawth."

"You didn't chance to hear his name?" pursued Lyndsay, in a pre-occupied tone.

"Yaas, sir—they come here, him an' the lawyer, for my master to sign the papers. I showed him into the library. It was Mr. Sharpless, sir—Mr. Amasa Sharpless, of some place in Massachusetts—or p'r'aps Connecticut. I disremember which."

"By George!" Lyndsay had exclaimed, slapping his thigh in a manner wholly expressive and inconsistent with the heat.

The surprise of this information had gone with him into the garden—had held him during his interview with Mona, and continued after Britannicus had taken her father inside. For Mr. Amasa Sharpless was none other than his own mother's brother, recently deceased, the whole of whose hoarded property had passed into Lyndsay's possession!

While Mona forsook him to read her letter, Lyndsay fully abandoned himself to the surprise of the situation. He could not tell whether he was glad

or sorry of what had come to pass, because of the new relation it entailed with the Carlyle family, and dreaded the moment when Mona should find it out.

"Which she shall not do if I can prevent it," passed through his mind. "For all queer happenings to me this is the strangest. It is not Mr. Carlyle, not my poor uncle, but I, who am actually the owner of Carlyle Manor!"

And Mona, in her own chamber, under the light of a single bedroom candle, was eagerly reading the while closely written lines penciled upon a sheet of thin, blue, foreign paper, that had been folded many times.

Not the ideal prison missive, inscribed in heart's blood upon a scrap of torn handkerchief, but to the full as interesting and absorbing to its recipient:

Fort Delaware, September —.

At last the chance comes to me, so long and eagerly waited, to communicate with my dear friends and home people. Such a proud fellow as I feel myself to be, owning a whole sheet of paper and the stub of a pencil—both to be hurried into a place of concealment I wot of should authority turn my way! And the idea that this will reach Mona's hands—that her kind eyes will rest on it—how exhilarating! Now, whatever you do, dear cousin, don't let those eyes fill with tears while you are reading me, for I am really so much better off than when first they made me a guest of Government in Washington, with very restricted quarters, I can't find it in my heart to complain at all. I am well, I have room to walk about in, I don't suffer—except from small animated nature at intervals. I saw my face in a plate of molasses yesterday, and my cheeks are round and full. I get food enough, and exercise on the parapet looking out to the river; and beyond my poor deserts I have found friends—friends in the Seats of the Mighty, who give me interviews and are pleased to show interest in my case—friends among humble people who carry bayonets, and would like, an they dared, to wink at my taking small liberties with law. And best of all, friends of my own class and stripe—seen only from afar, of course, but by some mysterious freemasonry we understand each other's signals and converse satisfactorily in a way that puts a new heart under my ribs and keeps hope alight. As to the cause of my being here at all, that seems to me to have been so long ago, it has passed into aboriginal history. I can't explain it to you—certainly not here. I don't ask my good friends at Carlyle Manor—for there you all

are, of course, in this piping weather, keeping cool and comfortable; don't I wish I were of the group for one short hour!—I don't ask you to believe that I am utterly and wholly guiltless of what they allege against me, because I know you do. It is monstrous that any enemy of mine should credit me with such stuff as conspiracy, much less my dear, dear kinspeople. If ever they go through the farce of trying me, truth must come out. But now—I am helpless, I can only wait. Be brave for me, dear cousin, and keep cheerful. Some day we will all laugh together again—and you will listen while I talk—how I shall talk after those months of silence! Certain black pages in my prison life in Washington will be sealed together and put out of mind. The rest shall be to us mere incidents of a soldier's career, to be referred to cheerfully, and lived over again, with thankfulness that they were no worse. Remember, I'm no martyr; I've never pined nor considered myself an object of pity—but here, my paper's used up, my stub refuses to make another mark. Let who will read this, I am not ashamed of it, nor, dear little cousin, to say that I am always your and your father's and mother's loving

LANCE.

How like him in every line! She could hear him say the phrases. She laughed and cried by turns over the pages, but it did not occur to her to kiss them. There had been nothing between Lance and herself to warrant that sort of outburst. He was simply the dearest, bravest, handsomest of cousins, whom she loved dearly and who would always have her loyal faith.

Much comforted, she ran down again into the garden to find Lyndsay stargazing in a philosophic way.

"Thank you a thousand times for my letter," she said. "The only thing that made me want to cry in it was that he imagines us spending the summer all together at the Manor, and does not know that my darling mother will never be there again—that, thank God, she won't have the sorrow of knowing we can't go back there. For I suppose, you have heard, Mr. Lyndsay, that our dear old home is sold?"

"I have been told so," said Lyndsay, with reserve.

"It is better that it should be to a man one has never heard of. The worst I know of this Mr. Sharpless is that he proposes to sell the timber. But let us not talk of any more sad or

terrible things. I want to keep up the happy influence of dear Lance's letter for a while. And above all I want to know—if I may—all about how you got it for me. Now, Mr. Lyndsay, I'm all ears, and would be eyes, if the light allowed."

"Oh, but I can't reveal all my mysteries," said the young man, divided between pleasure at seeing her roused into a moment's brightening and a jealous pang at what had brought it about. "If I did there would be an end of everything. But I have promised myself the pleasure of also taking a letter back to Colonel Carlyle from you. You have seen that this one had been folded many times. I may tell you it came out in a roll of baker's bread from the prisoner's casemate."

"Did you go near the fort?" she asked, with sparkling eyes.

"Rather near. At least to a village not far away in New Jersey."

"It couldn't have been chance that brought this about. Now, was it, Mr. Lyndsay?"

"No, not chance, exactly—I——"

"You hesitate—you aren't a bit good at beating around the bush. You know you managed it all your own good self."

"It's a very incriminating admission you are trying to force from me, Miss Carlyle."

"You did do it then? And for us, who had already imposed so much on you?"

"For you," he said simply.

Mona did not heed the emphasis upon the pronoun. She was lost in this amazing kindness and forethought from a stranger, a wayfarer who had tarried with them for so brief a time and had already wrought them such noble and delicate service.

"And when must I have my letter ready in return?"

"The sooner it is finished, the sooner Colonel Carlyle will be made happy by it. By the way, I may tell you this—that I have ascertained he has won all his jailers and guards, from the highest to the lowest, to liking and respecting him. They call him the

champion prisoner of the fort and declare his pluck and good temper invincible."

"Oh, I am so glad!" she exclaimed. "But then you know it was never any other way. It is simply impossible not to be won by Lance."

"So I should judge by your experience," he said drily.

"Oh, I didn't mean that way!" she exclaimed girlishly. "You know, Mr. Lyndsay, I often forget that Lance and I are ever to be anything but dear chums and cousins. We were only engaged for half an hour before he rode away to the surrender. Of course, I shall be different when he comes back again," she concluded, with astonishing naïveté.

Lyndsay sat upright on the edge of his chair. This Mona, warmed to confidence and excited by a glimpse of brighter things, was quite another than his sad, self-contained heroine of the Occupation. The bare hint of what she might be in happier girlhood, joined to her artless admission about her cousin, went to his head like wine. But he restrained himself, laying an iron hand upon the rein.

"I want to tell you also about our mutual friend, Colonel Claxton," he went on. "He is really the best friend I ever had. Not content with working for my appointment among the regulars, he has advised me in all the other plans I had in mind, and told me that before I came finally to a decision I must make him a friendly visit at Newport."

"Do go. You will love it. How well I remember that villa and the deep veranda and gorgeous flower beds; most beautiful of all, the sea that I have hardly ever known well—such wide, blue vistas sparkling and glinting, and the sense of endless distance beyond. For all that, I could never love it, nor any place, as well as the poor old Manor," she added, with a sigh. "But you have not told me if you have finally arranged for the army."

"You will let me impose on you with my own affairs?"

"I am full of interest in them. I

have thought of you over and over again, and wondered if I should hear—I never supposed it could be anything but good."

These kind words of the girl he loved filled Lyndsay with satisfaction and tenderness. In all the world, since his mother died, there had been no other woman so to speak to him, and he felt, in grateful return, that if he might not woo Mona Carlyle, he could at least take to himself the solace of her sympathy.

"It is a strange thing that has come to me," he said, after a pause to collect his words. "While I waited in Washington my position in life was among the vast majority who must toil up to a comfortable livelihood and an established place. I was alone, poor, comparatively unfriended, free to choose my career, and feeling that it would be years before anyone would so much as turn at the mention of my name. A soldier of fortune—the idea was not unattractive, on the whole. Then, in the opening of a yellow envelope that came to me through the War Department and left me dumb with amazement, my whole situation changed. I had never counted upon anything more from my uncle at Airedale. He was one of those spare, wiry, inflexible men who suggest living on forever, and had told me at parting that I was to have no mention in his will. Well, the telegram stated that he had died suddenly without making any will, and that I was the sole heir."

"What a fairy tale!" exclaimed Mona.

"I think, if I hadn't discovered among his papers an unsent letter to me showing that he felt some natural kindness to me and remorse for his treatment of my mother, I should have chucked the whole thing overboard, especially as to take this large property meant tying myself up to the mill business that I had learned to hate while I was his subordinate, chafing under his daily tyranny."

"But surely, common sense showed you that view of it would have been childish to keep up?" she said practically.

Aug. 1905

"Of course. But men are children when keen resentments and old grievances are uppermost. I deliberated for a night in my small, cheap room in the Washington hotel, but sent a telegram next morning and followed it by the train. When I reached Airedale I found the lawyers and my uncle's chief employees actually eager for me. It was a great sensation to feel myself wanted to that extent. They took me in charge without relenting, shut me up for hours in the stuffy inside office, where I once used to go expecting rebuke and insult, and administered to me mill business in large, continuous, heroic doses. I declare to you, Miss Carlyle, during that ordeal I would have given my head to be out and away on my troop horse in a forced march through an unknown country. However, I survived it—even earned some commendation from my tormentors, and spent a week in going over the ground in all respects. I am the owner of a larger property and wider interests than anyone believed my uncle to have possessed. In his late years he had a secret fad for acquiring real estate here, there, everywhere, which may turn out of great value in the growth of a new prosperity, some of which transactions have not yet been traced. The long and short of it is, I must give up the army and work for all I am worth in following up my uncle's various investments and putting the new life they tell me will be needed into his factories."

"I congratulate you with all my heart!" she exclaimed. "The little I know of such things points me to nothing, but I feel, I imagine, that you will soon be full of interest and happiness in your work. Didn't I say, Mr. Lyndsay, that for you the future held nothing but success? Remember my prediction in this very garden, and confess I'm a good prophet!"

Her simple cordiality, no less than her clear way of accepting the inevitable in his affairs, proved a needed tonic.

"Then you indorse me throughout?" he said, brightening. "That is good.

If you have time and patience to listen I should like to tell you about a house—one of my uncle's purchases—that I visited the other day. It is not supposed that he would have ever lived there. He preferred his clapboarded cottage with the jig-saw decorations, standing a little way back from the village street, with its weedy yard and an iron dog on one side of the plank walk to the front door; on the other, an iron deer. That is what I used to call my home, and there he died. He bought this other place presumably to sell at a profit to some rich summer resident. It is out of town, away from the noise of the factories, but in sound of the wonderful meeting and plash of many mountain streams that feed our busy river. Oh, those bonny becks—how I loved them as a boy, how I always shall love them! The whole horizon around Airedale is locked in by misty blue summits and nearer rugged hills, and there are fragrant valleys like green troughs, and here and there the bluest, most tranquil little lakes. The house stands on the crown of a sloping hill, with glorious views on every side, and fresh winds hurtling around it!"

"Don't! You make me envious!" cried she.

"Perhaps I am biased, but our North country appeals to the Viking side of me, and I breathe freer in its air."

"Is it a pretty house?"

"Square and solid, built by a strict utilitarian, out of stone from native quarries—not an effort at outside decoration. An opportunity, my shrewd uncle thought, for some city man with a long purse and an ambitious wife. For an hour I stood outside of it, listening to the voice of waters and gazing at the hills, and dreaming that it will one day be my real home, till the hack driver lost patience and reminded me 'twas nigh on to noontime,' and he'd 'got to get his dinner and meet the one-thirty train.' Then I braced up and took a hasty scamper through the inside. It had been bought, furnished, from

a man who failed in business. Such a lot of mortuary chambers as I found, each gloomier than the other! A bonfire in the hall, clearing out all that stuff they call furniture, would be a tremendous gain—then one could cram it up with books.”

“Go on. Tell me more. It is all so different from here. It makes me forget for a little, little while——”

Her high spirits fell suddenly. She could not long maintain them.

He had avoided touching upon the topic of her most recent grief, and she had bravely put it away, each feeling that speech on that subject was impossible. But the recollection of his devotion on this spot to her beloved sufferer was never far from Mona's mind. He was interwoven with the tragic episode. The bond he had laid upon her gratitude would go with her to her grave.

He talked on, answering her questions, soothing her nervousness, until the tremor went out of her voice, and she spoke naturally again.

“All this time,” she exclaimed, “you haven't said why you left Aire-dale almost directly after you got there, and went to New Jersey.”

“Have I not? I thought I said ‘for you.’ Besides, that was the first moment it was actually possible for me to do what I had planned.”

The blood rushed into Mona's cheeks. How dull of her not to have realized that the first use of his money possibilities had been to secure a passing happiness for her! And how sweet it was to be thus cared for from afar! Her silence showed him that she understood.

Just then a faint, welcome breeze began to sigh in the magnolia tops. Some youth, passing in the street outside the wall, trolled in a sweet, untutored tenor voice a song of love. The stars shone less brilliantly because by now the moon had risen, filling that cup of sweets, the garden, with pale radiance. In one of the two young hearts thus entrapped by nature's cunning a strong, true passion was already enthroned securely. Noth-

ing could dislodge it, neither adverse fate nor his own efforts. The flood of time alone could lessen its control of him, although he had no hope of winning her. In the other, the mystery of love was just awakening, with soft, ineffectual flutters and little, happy throbs. She did not recognize the invader, and only knew that a peace and joy long flown from her innocent maidenhood had returned, making her wish that this hour could endure without limit.

Old Clarissa, the dark chaperon, crouched on the doorstep of the house, napping at intervals, but occasionally sitting up, alert and perplexed to know why the young man stayed so long. She had every appreciation of Marse Lyndsay's worth, but it did not seem to her the child was old enough to be receiving young gentlemen's visits “all by her lone self, an' no ma to look after her, the lamb!”

The pair under the magnolias put an end to her speculations finally. They arose together, and walked toward the house, Britannicus, like a spider, simultaneously emerging from some lair at the back, and making swiftly to the front door. Because Miss Mona was worse than orphaned, there was no reason to neglect the conventionalities of the occasion, he justly thought. Mona bade her guest farewell, supported on either side by the ancient negroes, one courtesying, the other bowing, in old-school fashion.

Lyndsay, promising to return on the morrow for the letter she was to intrust to him, and also to inquire after Mr. Carlyle's health, took his leave, walking with characteristic quickness and determination down the moonlit street.

Mona, who wanted to re-read her treasure, sent mammy away so hastily that the old nurse found her coadjutor, the butler, still engaged in putting out the lights below and shutting up the house, under the superintendence of Phoebe, stepped in to keep her liege company.

“Brit,” said the nurse, who, being that dignitary's sister, sometimes ventured to abbreviate his fatiguing pre-

nomen, "'pears to me Marse Lyndsay looks at my lil' girl the way cats look at cream. An' lettin' alone Marse Lance, it won' do. Nawth and South ain't ready to pull together, yet."

"Sister Clarissy," replied her brother sententiously, "right you air."

"There's folks in this neighborhood that's a'ready noticed our lettin' her keep company with Yankee soldiers. That sassy hussy Venus, at Dr. Paulin's, had the impudence to tell me 'twas enough to make Miss Mona's grandcestors git out o' their graves and dance to see her goin' around with a common guard."

"Worn't no use to answer a low-down creetur' like that there Venus," remarked the sage. "But ef you *had* felt called upon, Sister Clarissy, you mout ha' foun' it convenient to remind her that if we ain't capable how to tell real quality on sight, we don' go to the Paulins, whose grandfather was a nigger trader, to find out. An' I don' min' lettin' you gals know," he added, big with suppressed knowledge, "when I let him out the do' just now, Marse Lyndsay giv' me the speshul information that sence his uncle died he's got more money than he can shake a stick at."

"Huccom he to mention that, Mr. Cyarter?" interpolated Phoebe, with an eager eye.

"Jus' you wait, ole 'ooman," answered her lord, chinking something in his pocket with rich enjoyment. "What would you say to a ten for me an' a five for each o' you? Brand-new, shiny gold fellows—a keepsake to remind us of our fightin' de fire that day?"

"I'll allers testify if Marse Lyndsay ain't quite good enough for our young miss, he's jus' *almost*," exclaimed Phoebe joyfully.

"Hush your nonsense, Mrs. Cyarter; that young man's the best there is," observed Britannicus, with marital finality. "An', Sister Clarissa, I'd advise you not to bother your head speckerlatin' 'bout our chile's marryin' anyone on God's earth 'cep'n our own Marse Lance. Ole Marse won' die happy ef he don' see her settin' some

day at the head o' de Carlyle Hall mahogany ladlin' out soup from Queen Anne's tureen!"

"Reckon you've got de jud'men', Mr. Cyarter," interposed his spouse recklessly. "But de price o' butter and aigs this spring has brought me to a realizin' sense that 'thout money for the marketin' there ain' no such thing as reel happiness. And it'll be many a long day 'fore Marse Lance can git out that tureen from his silver ches', I'm thinkin'."

"The good Lawd will provide," remarked mammy, to fill up an uncomfortable pause. "All I pray is that He'll spare me to nuss one o' Miss Mona's babies."

IX

LANCELOT CARLYLE was by now quite another being from the tense, overstrung stoic who had been removed from the scene of his prison experience in Washington to a new variety of durance. The Danish captain who, with two guards, conveyed him to the old moated fortress in the Delaware River some miles below Wilmington, had found him a jolly traveling companion.

The Government had not relaxed its iron grasp upon the prisoner. It was still solitary confinement they decreed to him at Fort Delaware, under that old, continual, maddening survey of a guard forbidden to speak. At stated times he was allowed exercise between two sentinels upon the ramparts, where his horizon seemed to widen visibly. His commandant, the officers of the post, the guards and attendants all showed him mute kindness in many trifling ways. Above all, there were now near him friends in like plight with himself—old, tried friends, officers of rank in the Confederate army, who had fought to the last ditch and never stained hands nor souls with foul assassination—who were held as witnesses in a trial supposedly to come. So long as he had a glimpse of these men upon their walks, could exchange

glances of fellowship with them and lift his hat without speaking, the situation was endurable. If he were to suffer still further, in God's name let it be with such as they!

But in private relations the sense of isolation weighed heavily. The gentle and confiding image of Mona, the memory of his kinspeople and home, had gone behind a veil of silence and mystery. Strangely enough, it was still the vivid personality, the impelling charm of her who had wrecked him, that brightened his solitude. He would awake in his bunk thinking he saw her stand before a high, dim mirror, twisting the braids of her "amber-dropping" hair. He would feel again the irresistible touch of her hand upon his arm, and thrill with the thought that she had called herself his wife!

"Always I shall watch and work for you!" Cecil would, she must, come back into his life, no matter what clouds now lowered between them. Suddenly again he would recall with a start that his word, his faith, the best in him, was pledged to Mona—dear innocent, who had once fluttered for a moment like a frightened dove upon his heart, while her clear eyes told him she had never yet felt love!

Then, ever and ever again, echoed that whisper, surcharged with yearning tenderness, that had floated to him over the vulgar, jostling crowd hounding his footsteps to his prison cell. Do what he might, that always dwelt with him, soothed him, gave him hope. No woman's voice had ever seemed the same! Sometimes, pacing the parapet between two mute sentries, he heard it in the air and his feet grew light as his bounding heart.

But too often of late during the night watches that made the world seem so far away, the fear that Cecil was ill or dead had become intolerable, and he longed for daylight to give him cheer.

The chance that had come to him through Lyndsay to send out a letter to Mona, and receive one from her in return, had opened the way to a more wholesome phase of feeling. The early objects of his love and faith reassumed

their rightful place. Cecil, and all that concerned her, receded; Mona's dear, kind words were read over and over until he knew them by heart. It was as if his real betrothal had begun from the date when he realized how much Mona needed him at home!

Early in October the secret telegraph of every prison flashed to him interesting news. Through the water bucket in the corridor, to which prisoners were allowed to go singly to quench their thirst—the recipient of as many strong men's secrets as the Lion's Mouth of medieval Venice!—he became aware that General Beaton, long in duress near him, was about to be set at liberty. He knew also that the good wife of this old friend and brother at arms had come to the fortress to carry her prize away in triumph.

The next day Colonel Carlyle was officially transferred to the quarters left vacant by General Beaton; a larger, better room than his old one, with a table beneath a window looking to the west. Remembering Beaton's ever fluent muse, Lance was amused to see the whitewashed walls profusely scrawled with verse of a melancholy moral strain; chiefly lamentations over the decadence of man, their tone hardly according with the spirited war record of the author. But on the space hidden by a small, rude washstand he also found, to his delight, his own initials, with the number of his regiment! Beneath, in a cipher once used at the headquarters where he had served on staff duty with Beaton, he read something that caused him to lift his head and expand his chest with joy. It was a message telling him that friends were busy in his behalf, and he might soon look for good news from her who had promised to "watch and work"! This token from the outer world—the first save Mona's single guarded note—filled him with boyish glee. He wanted to shout, to sing, to cry aloud.

At breakfast-time next day the convict soldier who cooked and served his meals—an affectionate creature, with dog-like eyes, his debtor for many a kind act—set before him some rolls

of bread of unusual length, with a gesture toward one of them, which Lance laid aside and secreted. He broke it open later, to draw out with eager fingers a letter from Cecil Dare!

So Cecil had found an ally in Mrs. Beaton! Bless that dear woman for contriving this joy for him. The first paragraphs told him it was thanks to this kindest of friends that she had been enabled to hope to communicate with him. To his surprise and relief he learned further that the two ladies had lived together in one room of a boarding-house in Washington all the hot summer through, both working indefatigably for the release of their prisoners. They had met by chance, to become warm friends, never parting till Mrs. Beaton had succeeded in her effort, and Cecil had been spirited away to Newport to recruit her health under charge of another friend, also enlisted in Lancelot's behalf. But Cecil had not left the seat of Government without finding out two things: first, that the authorities had from the first been trying to trace out through Carlyle evidence of a plot among the officers of Lee's army against the lives and liberties of Federal leaders, and secondly, that they were almost wearied out with the host of witnesses who had offered themselves in his defense, and with the letters written in his behalf from all quarters of the South.

This letter was to assure him that efforts would not slacken nor testimonials lessen in number until the desired result was brought about. He was told of powerful influence newly brought to bear upon his case, and advised to send out a letter or two in certain quarters where they would take effect. And, in conclusion, came these words:

You may readily divine that I should not have had the courage to address myself to you directly had not the enormous relief come to me of learning from official sources that your arrest was not the direct result of a domiciliary visit from one Mr. Timothy Dollar, and of his misconception of the situation there. The house had been previously under suspicion—papers were known to exist there that could not be produced—there was enough to link the owner, then resident, with some one of the various suspected plots

of the nature I have described. However this may be, the suffering you have so nobly and innocently borne must be always shared by me. I think, by this time, you have understood my identity and my antecedents. Some day—heaven grant it be not far—I may try to tell you face to face that I am always your grateful and faithful friend,

C. D.

X

Two women, signally refined and distinguished, walked up and down in feverish excitement before the vine-covered porch of a cottage by the waterside, watching their escort, a tall, soldierly, red-headed young man in tweeds, try the effect of his eloquence upon its proprietor, a certain remonstrant Captain Fogg.

They had come thus far in pursuance of a project nursed in secret between the women, and assented to with some diffidence by the man, whose ideas of their sex in its relations to the public did not then project beyond the apostolic home-keeping limit.

Evidently the new arrivals were looked upon with suspicion, and even the promise of pay, elevated to a dazzling altitude, did not further convince the obdurate ones. No man Jack of the watermen would engage for the requested transportation, all declaring that not only was the tide "ag'in" the effort, but that orders from the fortress strictly forbade conveying to it the public in general unprovided with special permits. Though the war was over and done with, there still survived throughout the land a wholesome respect for military rule, which no neighbor of the post cared to forfeit lightly.

By the enunciation of these arguments, neither lady appeared to be convinced. They protested themselves ready to meet all consequences, redoubled their urgency, and, in the end, so moved the band of law-respecting patriots with sympathy that their chief spokesman cast about him for some method of transferring the responsibility.

"See here, strangers," he said, after an interval of thought, "it ain't as

we're disbleegin', but even if we hedn't no principles at stake, there ain't a boat among the lot of us fitten to kerry passengers 'cep'n it's ole Zekel Fogg's, who lives in that little blue cottage on the point yander."

At Zekel's the same experience befell the applicants. The skipper, a son of Anak, in shirt, trousers and galluses, repeated the familiar objections to their plan, and, upon being pressed hard by the girl, wavered, coughed and guessed his boat "wa'n't in any state for women-folk, seein' as he'd been fishin' in her yisteddy."

For consistency's sake he hemmed and hawed a little, but ended by conducting the trio to his landing-stage and doing the best he could at short notice to provide for his unwonted passengers by covering the inside of the boat with a clean sail. Monster of brawn and muscle although he was, the captain possessed a soft heart, with a shrewd understanding of some of the tender phases of weak human nature, and, instinctively, his suspicion settled upon the girl as the one of his employers who held the greatest stake in the expedition.

To speak truth, Cecil was far happier than she had been in months. Flying over the angry, darkling waves, the wind singing in her ears, meeting the spray showers heedlessly, her spirits rose, her color glowed, hope was the helmsman of her heart.

For indeed since the forlorn moment when she had contrived to be near him in the courtroom corridor, to whisper reassurance in the prisoner's ear, every effort of her life had been bestowed upon the freeing of Lancelot Carlyle. While he remained in the Arsenal shadowed by a worse calamity she had trodden the streets outside, yearning over him. After he was removed to Fort Delaware, chiefly through the efforts of friends and sympathizers secured by her, she had accepted the hospitality of the chief of these, a lady of New Orleans, who had long known her family, to remove with her to Newport pending further negotiations in Carlyle's behalf. To this charming

personage, Madame de Chercroix, who had grown to love Cecil like a sister, she was also indebted for the backing that made their present excursion possible.

Young Donald Lyndsay, who still only half approved of the adventure, even as their boat rose and plunged forward upon leaping waves that showed them with spray, asked himself ruefully how it was that he had become the personal conductor of an expedition he could not doubt would end in failure and mortification for all concerned.

He had met the two ladies at the house of his friend and patron, Colonel Dick Claxton, and by him had been led on to tell them of his acquaintance with the Carlyles in Richmond, and finally of his success in arranging a correspondence between Lancelot and his doubly-stricken family.

From the moment of this admission Lyndsay had felt that he was doomed to the service of a feminine intrigue. Madame de Chercroix, an old friend of Claxton's, widowed some time previously and coming North for change of air and scene, had taken up with enthusiasm Miss Dare's efforts in Lancelot's behalf. Lyndsay had not thought it necessary to inquire the reason for this zeal on Miss Dare's part. All women in those troublous times were working one way or another for the victims of the war. Claxton had told him that Madame de Chercroix's protégé came of an old Catholic family in Maryland, whose chief representative had made a més-alliance with a certain dashing Miss Molly Ball, the daughter of a tavern-keeper in his neighborhood; and, in consequence of the ill feeling resulting therefrom in his family connection, had moved to Virginia to live near Foxcroft. There Cecil and her twin brother, Selden, had grown up, and there, doubtless, had made acquaintance in youth with the nephew and heir of Mr. Julian Carlyle. At the outbreak of the Civil War the Dare family had moved further south. Upon her father's death in 1861 the

girl had been sent to New Orleans to be educated in a convent school, while the boy and his mother became well known as spies in the Confederate service, and, dropped by their reputable friends, had now fled to live abroad. Lyndsay compassionated Miss Dare for her misfortunes of relationship, and for Mona's sake felt that he could not hold back from any opportunity to carry aid and comfort to her imprisoned lover. But as they approached their goal he would have been glad to be well out of the affair.

Poor Cecil Dare alone knew what a weight she bore up those landing-steps, where they were curtly challenged by a sentry. While a soldier carried away their visiting cards for presentation to the commandant, with the request for a brief interview with that functionary, her head grew dizzy, her heart seemed to dissolve within her, her veins to run water instead of blood. Fled was her pride, her fine courage, as she stood gazing up at the gloomy walls, the sentried ramparts, the obtruding guns above, and down at the stagnant moat beneath. Around the fort the dull little island was dotted with officers' quarters, barracks and other military buildings, all dreary enough in contrast with the surroundings of happier lives. What was she, to walk free and erect among her kind, when he, inside those walls, was shut away from light and good-fellowship through her act, and because those belonging to her had sinned against the law?

Thinking of these things a great rush of solemn awe and tenderness came to her, such as her girl's heart had never known before. She felt that all her life, if he would have it, would be none too much to give to the one she had caused to suffer here.

It was a thrilling moment when the soldier, returning, requested them with official brevity to follow him to the office of the commandant.

They passed across the bridge, under the dread portal, through somber passages, and found themselves in the presence of the chief officer of the fort,

who sat at his desk, eying them with a bored and not very friendly gaze. If all the friends of all his thousands of rebel prisoners—so argued the good man—had considered themselves entitled to make such morning calls upon him, the commandant—where would the routine of work have betaken itself or the discipline of the fort? Positively, he must discountenance the whole business and rid himself of an intolerable nuisance!

From its brief survey of Lyndsay, who met with but gruff reception, the official eye passed on to rest upon the two women. Involuntarily he arose, his gaze softened, and he asked civilly what he could do for them.

The mention of Carlyle's name seemed to work wonders for their cause. The general's face cleared, lightened. He looked again, scrutinizingly, at the three visitors, his gaze lingering longest upon the youngest of them.

"You ladies are no doubt of the colonel's family?" he asked. "Sisters? Or cousins, perhaps?"

"No," answered Madame de Chercroix faintly. She was wishing she could say yes.

"No," said Cecil Dare bravely, looking him full in the eyes.

"H'm!" said the general.

He went back to his desk, made a show of turning over papers, then abruptly, with a gleam of kindly determination in his eyes, called to an orderly, despatching him upon some errand unknown to them.

"Madame," he then observed, addressing himself to the chaperon, "if you will intrust this young lady to my care, and you and Mr. Lyndsay will take seats here for a while, I should like to show her some glimpses of the fortress which in future days I think it will please her to remember."

Madame de Chercroix smiled—again the *grande dame* in her most gracious attitude.

Lyndsay, astonished and bewildered at the turn affairs were taking, was pacing to and fro. Things seemed, indeed, to have gotten away from him as well as his sovereign lady, Mona,

when Cecil Dare was thus thrust to the front in Lancelot's affairs!

He cast a glance of vexed inquiry upon Madame de Chercroix, who, dropping upon a chair, was looking quietly jubilant. Miss Dare promptly followed the commandant, who, as they left the room together, held open the door for her with distinguished courtesy and an almost paternal kindness. The color rushed into Lyndsay's face. He did not like to interfere, and to relieve himself walked gloomily back and forth.

In another part of the same building a scene was enacting that had known but few variants for many a long week. Lancelot sat at the table beneath his casement; before him ranged a row of volumes taken from the post library, but today he was aweared of print and strangely unquiet. He felt the need of some tonic reminder to stir his soul from its growing apathy. Taking pencil and paper, he traced out names—names destined to ring through history—a list of the battles his regimental flag had won the right to inscribe in honor upon its folds!

A goodly show when he had finished it! Manassas, Mechanicsville, Gaines's Mill, Frazer's Farm, Malvern Hill, Cedar Mountain, Warrenton Springs, Second Manassas (both days), Ox Hill (Chantilly), Harper's Ferry, Antietam, Shepherdstown, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville (all three days), Bristoe Station, Mine Run, Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House (three days of that, too), Jericho Ford, Cold Harbor, First Reams Station, Battle of September 30, 1865, right of Petersburg; Battle of Squirrel Level Road, Battle of the Dalney House; Burgess Mill, October 27, 1864; Hatcher's Run, February 6 and 7, 1865; action on Petersburg Front, 1865—and so on, ending in the grand, sad climax—Five Forks before Appomattox station, evening before surrender, April 8!

Ah! his blood was not stagnant now; and this didn't include what he was pleased to style a "thundering lot of little scrimmages."

Where, among the tattered colors

treasured in cathedral naves and historic palaces the world over, was written a longer list? What fights had been hotter, what more valiant foes had met in them? In brief words, that flag of his, followed so ardently, had been seen in every general action fought by the Army of Northern Virginia from first Manassas to Appomattox. By heaven, he had lived!

Suddenly his door creaked upon its hinges. He turned, vexed to be brought back to the cold reality of his convict-soldier-servant.

The greatest surprise since his arrest last May awaited him. It was not his soldier, but the general's orderly, bearing a message that made Lance want to whoop with solid joy.

"Better be careful, sir," ventured the orderly as the guard outside looked in reprovingly.

Both men wore, however, a look of suppressed leniency combined with a smirk of mild intelligence. In some subtle fashion it had been borne in upon them that the colonel's extraordinary summons "to see a lady" had something to do with the sentimental passion that makes the whole world kin.

"Hurry, orderly!" cried the prisoner joyfully.

While Cecil, in the general's wake, threaded devious ways and dingy corridors, no word passed between them as to her errand to the fort. As he paused here and there, in conventional explanation of localities, her heart flew before her like a bird. What he thought, what anybody thought, had ceased to vex the soul in the face of the overpowering joy of anticipation. But when they stepped across the threshold of a door into a gloomy central court, with high walls of masonry, she uttered an involuntary exclamation of dismay.

"Look up, over yonder, into the casemate facing us," said a kind voice in her ear. "That is part of the exercise ground of our star prisoners, and perhaps—I don't know—you *might* recognize a friend."

She obeyed. It was as if a sunburst had illumined the whole dull place.

For there, in the casemate high above, looking down at her, with a guard on either side of him, a cannon in his rear, stood her prisoner, radiant, boy-like, waving his hat in air!

Vanished her doubts and fears, forgotten her long hours of anguish since their parting. Nothing remained but the pure delight of seeing him once again. And surely, never before in the happenings of this stronghold, where so many caged, impatient spirits had borne starved silence and forced oblivion of the outer world, had a gladder moment come to one of them than was reflected upon his face!

Their eyes had but met in a too brief avid gaze, when the guards signed to him to fall back. Another wave of the hat and he was gone. Imploringly she turned upon her guide.

"What? You aren't satisfied?" he asked in a rallying tone.

"Yes, yes. Thank you a thousand times. But oh——"

"But oh!" he returned, with pretended gruffness. "Why, my young lady, more than this would be out of all reason, don't you see?"

"I see," she said sadly, with filling eyes.

"This way, please," he added abruptly, striding ahead. She noticed that he despatched a messenger to precede them, and that they were taking a different way from that by which they came.

A desperate new hope sprang up in Cecil's breast, but she dared not give it voice. Her feet followed him, strengthening as they mounted stairs and traced out narrow entries, her thoughts still coursing eagerly ahead.

"Now I will leave you for a few moments," said the general as they finally emerged into daylight under an arch of masonry, at the rear of a sea-ward-pointing gun. "I shall return almost immediately," he added, with a twinkle in his eye. "I hope you will not miss me overmuch."

So saying, he waved a beneficent hand toward a barricade of stout wooden palings dividing the casemate from the gallery beyond.

XI

"How in the world did you manage it?" asked Lance from behind the palings. His voice was shaken by wonder and delight. "Did you ride through the air on Starlight, who developed wings for the occasion? And oh, how good, how good, how good of you to come!"

She felt that then, if ever, it behooved her not to cry.

"I came over from Newcastle in a very fishy old sailboat, with friends who are chaperoning me conventionally," she said, steadying her nerves with a tremendous effort. "It is owing to the heavenly goodness of your chief that I am here now. He must want very much to give you a token of his sympathy."

"He is a trump, and we are the best of friends. But I never dreamed of such luck as this. I thought, when I saw you standing down there like a fairy apparition in the gloomy old court, that to have you wave to me was enough! But this—this! There is only one thing lacking. I want to feel as well as see. By no possibility can I squeeze my hand through the space between these boards. But yours—so slim, so fine, it can easily come to me."

She blushed, but at once slipped her bared right hand through the barricade, where it was held for a moment in the hottest, gladdest, eagerest grasp of man she was likely ever to meet again.

"Jove, this is immense!" cried he. "Now am I ready to declare that I have spent the summer famously. I am even recruited with content for a longer enlistment in a dungeon."

"Don't, please. It breaks my heart!" she sighed, the tears, in spite of her, now welling and overflowing. "But who knows how long we may be permitted to talk? I must make haste to tell you that we have now the brightest hopes of your release—without much delay, unless certain powers that are persistently obnoxious find out new obstacles—without trial, we are told."

"A trial in this case would certainly bring them up with a round turn," he said grimly.

"I know—who knows better? It is too dreadful to remember. If it is any comfort to you to feel that I have suffered with you—daily, hourly, and all the pangs of self-reproach in addition——"

"Do you suppose that pleases me?" he interrupted. "Let us call it fortune of war and cry quits. You were a brave, true girl, driven to the wall in a terrible predicament, and what you did——"

"Will be worked out in atonement if I live," she said, floods of crimson suffusing her fair face.

"Let us waste no more good time in talking about that. Tell me of yourself. You are well, evidently—you say you are with friends. You have not, then, rejoined your mother?"

"No," she answered sadly. "But I know, at least, where she is and that she prospers. I have found a benefactress in the dearest, most enchanting woman that breathes, who is spending the summer at Newport. She is waiting below, full of sympathy for you. I dared tell her my whole story as far as you are concerned, and she has been all that is noblest, most patient with me. It is the Madame de Chercroix."

"Oh, I remember her perfectly. I met her once in New Orleans, and, like everybody else, adored her. Bless the dear lady for her kind offices."

"We must hurry and talk business. There are one or two points in the movement for your release of which you must be informed. One or two questions I must ask you. It is all due to Madame de Chercroix's wonderful tact and influence that we are succeeding so well. They say your chances have never been so good."

Rapidly they interchanged queries and answers important to his case. His words came in an ardent flow, his unconquerable spirit welled up in buoyant phrases. While he spoke all fear, all sorrow, seemed to take wing. His generous assurance that she need

never again feel a pang concerning her share in his great misfortune brought tears of gratitude welling to her eyes.

"Come, I can't stand that," he said quickly. "Remember, it's your mission to cheer, not sadden me. Let me tell you that since your letter through Mrs. Beaton I've been a new man, full of high hope and courage. And if ever I'm free of this little entanglement——"

"If? *When*. You will be, you must be, soon. Why, you are among the very last prisoners of war."

"Well, *when* I am free I will make my pilgrimage to you, and try to persuade you of all you have been to me."

"Your first pilgrimage? Your very, very first?" she repeated happily.

Her voice, her eyes, her cheeks were traitorous. In a lightning flash he saw the gulf over which they stood. The effect was like a fall of snow upon blossoming roses. He realized that she had no suspicion of his actual relation to another woman, and could not doubt what sorrow that knowledge must bring. It was a sudden and dreadful awakening. He must speak now without delay. In all honor he must not let her go without a full knowledge of his engagement. She, looking at him, her rapt soul in her gaze, saw with astonishment the change that passed upon his handsome, open face.

Her pride, taking the alarm, whispered that he felt he had gone too far with her. She hurried into speech.

"Good-bye. I see you are recalling what we've both been trying to forget. You were forgiving to stoop to speak to me again," she said.

"Surely you don't mean that?" he said, with an effort to recover his former buoyant tone. "I admire, respect you heartily. There is every reason why we should be friends. But, for a time, perhaps——"

"Yes—for a time?" she repeated blankly, dreading what was to come.

"It might be better—best—for both of us to try not to dwell too much upon the things that brought us to know each other—at least until the great pain has died out of it for both. To me you will always be a true heroine—

brave, noble and deserving of all honor and reverence. But our paths will lie apart. When I'm my own man again I have a duty to which my brain, these hands and my best powers must be devoted before all."

"Your people— Oh, of course," she said, trying to warm to her theme. "From Colonel Claxton, from Mr. Lyndsay, we have heard of their sorrows and their brave endurance. For Miss Carlyle, especially, no praise seems to be too high."

"Well done!" cried Lancelot. "Dear, gallant little Mona, she deserves all that can be said of her. I ought to tell you," he added, after a painful pause, "that my cousin and I—are to be married some day."

"Shall we go back to your friends, Miss Dare?" said the general, coming up. "I am rather afraid they will be wondering what I have done with you."

"Not when I have told them what wonderful kindness you showed in letting me talk so long with an old friend in trouble," she answered steadily. "Good-bye, Colonel Carlyle, and be sure I shall lose no time in letting your people in Richmond know how well the Government is keeping up your health and spirits."

She was going without a handshake when the appeal in his eyes smote her with compunction. Bravely, under the general's eyes, she again thrust her hand—a cold hand now—between the bars. He clasped it with fingers as chilly as hers. He knew, at last, without a peradventure, what was between them—what warm, living thing he had been obliged to kill!

XII

AUTUMN lapsed into winter, and the first Christmas after the fall of the Confederacy was at hand. To most Richmond folk the season brought little but sad remembrance and the galling sense of poverty, from which only the very young could struggle out into insouciance. Mona Carlyle, with her vision suddenly awakened to stern

responsibility, great personal sorrow, keen lamenting for the Lost Cause—and for perhaps something intangible that had escaped out of her girl's life—had a sense of the weight of added years and wondered if she had ever been a child.

An ever present care, in addition to the growing dependence of her father upon her loving services, was that Lance, all efforts to the contrary, remained still a prisoner of war. In latter days no news whatever came to them from the fortress, and a sort of obstinate silence seemed to settle around her cousin's fate. In the household in Richmond the colonel's kinspeople now thought of him with dull aching instead of the old, keen yearning to get him back.

It was a cruel winter to most of Mona's friends, and the girl recognized that her lot was less hard than that of many of those around her. The money strain was but little eased by the proceeds of the sale of their country home, since her father, with a gleam of his former imperious will, amid the semi-senile expressions of his present fancies and desires, had directed their lawyer to divert a large portion of this sum into meeting certain liabilities incurred in the zeal of his belief in the triumph of Southern arms. In vain Mr. Chester set forth to his client the possibility and prudence of delay in making these payments. It was a last desperate casting upon the funeral pyre of the old man's hopes and of his high sense of honor, the jewel that had survived his actual and mental wreck!

At this season of the year it had always been the Carlyle custom to journey out of town in their own carriage to spend a fortnight at the Manor, sending Britannicus and Phoebe on ahead to open the house, stock the larder, light the furnace fires, and pile upon the andirons of every fireplace hickory logs and fat pine kindling ready to leap into sparkling welcome when wheels, sounding upon the bridge across the "crick," a quarter of a mile down the avenue, should herald the approach of family and guests.

The Carlyles had not attempted anything to speak of since the first Christmas of the war, and then came the gap left by Harry, that in no way could be filled or bridged. Mona's father and mother had the year before made a strenuous attempt to renew bygones, going up to pass the week of the twenty-fifth of December at their country home. In lieu of dancing and romping guests, they had carried up to Carlyle Manor a few maimed, convalescent soldiers, whom they regaled with such make-believe substitutes for former dainties as the pinch of the times allowed. But it had been a lame and halting Christmas at best, Mona felt.

Ah, no! it was all gone, vanished forever, the gleam and glitter of old Christmas-time at Carlyle Manor. She remembered how she had once told Donald Lyndsay—eager for local color—how Virginians of their stripe were wont to disport themselves when the gladdest of Christian festivals came round. Lyndsay had listened eagerly, made her give him every detail of her childish memories, and reproved himself fiercely when, at ending, she had broken down in a fit of weeping. Afterward, when by that queer freak of Fortune's wheel, Lyndsay himself had come to be the owner of the property, he had thought of this incident over and over again!

But Mona never heard of Lyndsay now. She was glad in a way that this was so, for with dawning womanhood she had come to apprehend fully that the moment of recognizing her first love was also the moment of such misery and humiliation as never before had grazed the surface of her young life, much less sunk deep into it! She knew he was good and kind and wise and true, and that if all other things had been equal she must have gloried in choosing him for her mate. But the barrier between them was immovable as Destiny, even if there had not been Lance.

Lance, for whom every fiber of her being throbbed in generous sympathy! Lance, poor, ruined, imprisoned, while the other was on the wave of riches and

success! No, a thousand times no, she said to herself hotly. Anything rather than a failure of moral sense like that. All the Carlyles who went before her in their family history had been faithful—faithful to their faith, faithful in their love, faithful in their death.

There had been no one to tell of these distresses, for Mona was proud and had few intimates, having always been content to give her best confidence to her mother, and let the world take only what remained. Her father, before all, would have been most pained at her defection from her patriotic creed. He would have withered her with his sardonic contempt as a renegade to her flag and her country's honor! And poor Mona herself had believed so ardently in what they had been suffering for.

Mona saw also that her father's physical strength was declining, that he was but holding himself together, as it were, for Lancelot's return and for the marriage between them, the thought of which had now become an obsession. Hardly a day passed that Alexius did not allude to it in some fashion or other. Whatever else was dimmed in his thoughts, that remained a clear purpose of his declining days.

The afternoon before Christmas found Mona seated in the window of the drawing-room near the recess in the wall, where hung the little portrait of her long gone aunt, that might have been Mona's breathing self. A fire of soft coal burned in the low grate, and here and there, in vases, were grouped white azaleas and yellow-haired acacia, calla lilies and fragrant roses, sent in by a lady of her neighborhood, fortunate in the possession of a greenhouse surviving the wreck of war.

The door opened and without announcement the familiar figure of their family physician came in to her from the library, where he had been in conference with her father.

"Dr. Shirley, you have bad news for me?" she exclaimed, reading his kindly face.

"No, my dear child, not that, thank

God! But I am troubled by a new phase of his errant fancy, which we have to handle and humor with continual nicety. He is now fixed upon the idea that you and he are to go up to the Manor to spend the holidays, and has asked me to be of the party. No putting aside of the question will content him, poor, dear man, and I am at my wit's end how to deal with it."

"I've seen lately," she answered, her eyes filling, "that the fact of his having sold the property has faded totally from his mind. I told him I had heard that the new owner, Mr. Sharpless, had put the house in repair and engaged servants for it, and had secured General and Mrs. Beaton to live there and take care of it. He showed some natural feeling, said a few sharp things about Yankee ideas of 'repair' not suiting an old Virginia residence, and wondered how Beaton, an ex-Confederate general, could demean himself by being hired 'help' for a man named at his baptism 'Amasa.'"

"Sounds like him," said the doctor, with twinkling eyes.

"I explained that I heard the Beatons were almost penniless, and that Mr. Sharpless, through our Mr. Chester, acting as his agent, had engaged them on very liberal terms, and had shown really delicate feeling and consideration, giving them *carte blanche* to live there as at home, reserving only a room for himself when he should feel like running down for the shooting."

"I wish to heaven you could manage to take your father out to the Manor for a day," blurted out the doctor, who had been gathering courage to tell her an unpleasant fact. "He is just in that condition of nervous strain with dwelling on this idea that I can't tell at what moment he may break down altogether. It would surely do him no harm to take the drive in fine weather like this, and it might act the other way, you see. I believe it might be done."

Mona sat irresolute, the color burning in her cheeks, her brows knitted in perplexity. She was pondering upon

both such great things as the return of Alexius Carlyle into the home of his fathers, bowed with age and infirmity, broken by self-sacrifice, craving as a boon the right to set his tottering feet once more across the threshold, and such petty things as the price the liveryman would ask for a hack in which they could go and come, and how they could venture to impose themselves upon Mrs. Beaton, whom they did not even know.

At this juncture the door of the drawing-room opened again, and Britannicus, who at all odd moments found himself on duty in the house, tripped mysteriously toward her.

"A lady to see you, Miss Mona. She says she is not acquainted with you, ma'am, but you are third cousins once removed on your mother's side. Mrs. Beaton, miss, if it's not disturbing you with the doctor."

"Not a bit of it," said Dr. Shirley, his face lighting; "I'm off this minute. Tell Mrs. Beaton your trouble frankly, Mona, and I'll wager she'll welcome you at the Manor with open arms."

In a moment more Mrs. Beaton came fluttering in. She was a small, round lady, in marked contrast to her stalwart husband, and no stress of fortune had been able to subdue her lightness of heart and indomitable good temper. Apparently under the influence of some emotion she was resolved not to betray, she began by shaking hands with Mona and ended by kissing her fervently.

"You dear child! I am not going to make a stranger of you, since we are really kin, even if it's a long way off—the Chattertons, you know—but why waste time, say I, talking about people who are mostly dead and gone, when we've got all these dear living ones to think of and work for? Ever since I came to Virginia I've been wanting to drop in on you, but there hasn't been a minute. We've been kept stirring, general and I, to do all that our new—employer—there, it's out! What's the odds, so long as I've got my good man safe and sound out of that horrid prison, and we've no chil-

dren to mind what we do for an honest living? It was hard work to get through all that was laid out to be finished before Christmas. Don't look alarmed, my dear; there's no change at the Manor that you can see, not an atom. Only everything freshened up and polished and made strong, to last as long again. General took as great an interest in it as I, but what with poor workmen and delays, we simply couldn't get off to drive into town till today, and I came straight here, of course."

"It is good of you to have done so!" cried Mona, her eyes shining. "Nothing—at least hardly anything—could please me so much in these days as hearing such news of our dear old home."

"Oh, yes, child, I understand. I've understood all along. But that wasn't what I came for, specially. Mind, you've got to be very sweet to me. I told general I simply couldn't rest till you and your father saw the Manor now it's spick and span. We drove down in the old carriage you left there, with a pair of strong horses that we are to have the use of. We are stopping overnight with a cousin of general's in Franklin street, Mrs. Graceleigh, who says she just loves you as everybody does, and tomorrow we want—we insist—that you shall go out with us for Christmas and take this old hoary retainer of yours, who opened the door for me, on the box seat by the driver. Now, don't say no; there is no earthly reason why you should. I have set my heart on it, and you must, *you must, you must!*"

Mona's answer was a burst of honest tears, that on the whole proved as effectual in explaining her view of the situation as generous Mrs. Beaton could have desired. The kind lady soothed her tenderly, lingering to talk until many subjects had been touched upon, and the two felt that they had known each other for long years. And when Mona found out her visitor's identity with the friend who, in October, had sent news to them of Lancelot in Fort Delaware, a new link was added to their friendship. The warm-

hearted, irrelevant little woman seemed to her an angel visitor. She did not dream of rejecting her hospitality. And Mrs. Beaton when she tore herself away was beaming with the double success of having secured her guests, and of not having betrayed who had inspired her action nor what she held in store for their delectation!

The next day saw the old Manor carriage—an immortal vehicle with red plush cushions, and folding steps that shot out when the doors were opened—turn in at the well-remembered road through a splendid pine wood, and cross the bridge across the "crick."

The day, the expedition, the congenial society of General Beaton, had combined to effect a rejuvenation of the invalid. Mona's fear that she would fail in causing him to understand the nature of their visit and of their relations to their hosts was happily dissipated. Alexius had become again, for the nonce, the courtly man of the world, accepting easily what he would have given as easily, chatting with his old spirit, enlivening the long drive by a flood of recollections, stories and droll jests touched with sarcasm. When his child would have taken cheer from these conditions she perceived, with sudden blank dismay, that he ignored everything connected with the war, his losses and sorrows, and with the absence of Lancelot, whose name did not cross his lips. He had simply gone back ten or fifteen years to an epoch when his fortunes were at flood-tide.

As they entered the hall, Britannicus offering his arm for old Marse to lean upon, General and Mrs. Beaton, with nice feeling, made some pretense to stop behind, motioning to Mona to precede them with her father. The old man, noticing nothing of this, strode forward masterfully, his spare form gaining erectness, his dim eye gleaming with satisfaction. Stopping at the accustomed place to be rid of his coat and hat, he looked about him with approval.

"It must be owned that in all our Christmases," he said, with a stronger note in his croaking voice, "we have never done the thing better than today. Monimia, my dear, since your mother is detained in town, you will stand by me to receive our guests." He had walked to the great fireplace, and stood with his back to a pile of blazing logs, beckoning her to follow.

Mona knew not where to turn, but dared not disobey. The Beatons and the old negro, ashen gray with apprehension, cautioned her by looks to let matters take their course,

As with trembling limbs she took her place at her father's side, it seemed to her indeed that the radiance of the firelight, and of the sun streaming through the large middle window behind the spiral stairs, the ruddy sheen of the mahogany of doors and furniture, the dark gleam of the polished floor, the myriad reflections from glass and brass under festoons of greenery, had combined, as never before, in a splendor of Christmas welcome. Nothing had changed its place, nothing was missing, but the great hall wore a look of brightness and admirable comfort unfamiliar to it for years. Mr. Carlyle, also, was transformed. It was as if this restoration of his forsaken home had distilled into the air some subtle essence of undying youth that was passing into his veins. Truly, to those who, half terrified, half encouraged, looked upon his face and form he had parted with years of dreary age and was born again to a new era of vigorous manhood. His chest inflated, his withered brown face curved into genial smiles, he advanced a few steps upon the rug, as if to receive Mrs. Beaton.

"You are too good, my dear madam, to come to us," he said cordially. "And the general, too. General, I take this kindly, and I bid you welcome on your first visit to Carlyle Manor. A nice old place, we think it; simple and unpretending, but always open to our friends. It was built by my father's grandfather in old Colony days, and I love every stick and stone

in it. My boy Harry, who's a bit of an antiquarian, can tell you some rather nice stories about our predecessors here— Where's Harry, Mona? He ought to have been here. When the rest of our friends arrive, general, you'll find your bearings among them. We'll have a rubber tonight, while the young folks foot it in the reel, and I'll ask your verdict on my 1798 Madeira. Yes, a fine fire. We lay by special logs for it. Monimia, my child, you will show Mrs. Beaton to her chamber, and explain that your mother is—Britannicus, what are you standing there making sheep's eyes at me about? Don't you know your business better? Come, stir yourself, boy, and see what the gentlemen will drink."

"Jes' as soon as I get Marse into his bedroom to rest hisself a little teeny weeny bit," pleaded the negro's coaxing and infinitely tender voice.

"Father dear, won't you come with us?" besought Mona, slipping a round young arm through his.

"Mona, Britannicus, I'm astonished at the pair of ye," snarled the master, turning wrathfully upon the conspirators. But the thread of his monologue was broken. He faltered, could not resume it, and in the end suffered himself to be led away by them.

"General, this is just more than I can stand," cried Mrs. Beaton, honest tears running down her cheeks. "It is simply harrowing. And what if the poor man runs upon Mr. Lyndsay while he is under this delusion, which is more than likely, because Mr. Lyndsay wishes to pay his respects to Mr. and Miss Carlyle before he leaves the Manor, and to explain to them how the place came into his hands. He thinks it would be fairer on all sides for them to fully understand. And if they only knew, as we do, what Mr. Lyndsay really is—all he has done to give them this Christmas surprise—but now——"

"Now, dear lady," said Lyndsay, coming in upon the perplexed guardians of his trust, "I have just seen my old friend Britannicus, who has explained the sad situation to me.

From what he tells me it would be a grave risk to attempt enlightening Mr. Carlyle now as to the real status of affairs. It is our plain duty to play into his hands, and while he remains here let him believe that all is as it was of old. As a matter of fact, it is much easier for me, and"—looking at his watch—"it should not be long before we shall have someone here who has the best right to lift all responsibility from our shoulders."

"Take care. Here comes Mona!" said Mrs. Beaton nervously. "I am sure she has already found out at least part of the truth."

The two men started back at the glowing, flying apparition that, at this juncture, burst in from the long corridor leading to her father's old "chamber" in the wing. Mona, flushed, enchanting, impetuous, her whole grateful soul in her eyes, looked neither right nor left, but ran straight to Lyndsay, taking his hand between her own, and speaking brokenly.

"It is you—you, who have planned this pleasure for us! You who have lifted up the old house out of its dust and cobwebs to look like this—you who are the owner of the Manor! Ah! thank God, thank God!"

Lyndsay, blushing furiously, looked thoroughly ill at ease. But he need not have feared spectators of the little scene, since the general and his wife had already disappeared, like partridges on the approach of mankind near their haunts, leaving not a trace behind. And while Mona's grateful eyes turned their witchery to his, and the couple stood alone in a stream of sunshine that seemed to bid all sorrow flee away, their young hearts attuned to hope and happiness, he felt the blood course like a mill-race through his veins. What could life do more for him than allow him to restore to her this beloved home and heritage? Since he had been laboring with the Beatons to bring about the completion of the house in time to give Mona a glimpse of her old-time Christmas happiness, he had grown to love and cherish the Manor as its earlier owners

had done. To restore things to their exact former footing had given him more delight than any other expenditure made since he had come into his inheritance. And that Mona, instantly, graciously, without asking words or explanations, had understood this, and felt with him in the recesses of his heart, was the fullest reward he could have asked.

So, for a mad moment, he remained, clasping her hand, noting with rapture the ceasing of her tears, her joy in the recognition of his generous toil, above all, her perfect trust of him—and then the brief splendor faded, and Lyndsay dropped Mona's hand with a sudden fierce gesture of renunciation.

"What is it—you are angry—offended?" she asked pitifully. "What have I done? Surely this hallucination of my poor father—?"

"Never, never that!" he cried, putting the width of the great fireplace between them. "I want to say to you here, once for all, that I did not even intend to obtrude myself upon your family reunion—this Christmas. The house and everything in it is yours while you choose to occupy it. Mr. Carlyle is master here, absolutely. By tonight I shall be in the train speeding northward—and by tonight there will be one who—"

He interrupted himself, choked by an unpalatable morsel of remembrance. Whatever its nature, Mona would not allow him to indulge in long consideration of it.

"Then if we are masters, and you are a visitor," she exclaimed joyfully, "you will never in the world be allowed to turn your back upon Carlyle Manor at Christmas-time. Here you are, here you stay, Mr. Lyndsay—to go, to come, to sit and mope alone, if you like, never to be bothered by talking to anyone who bores you—as at present," she added, with a swift feminine shaft. "But leave us, now? Impossible! There are fifty things I want to show you, and after my father has had his nap Britannicus thinks he will be quite himself once more. Oh, you won't go, say you

Aug. 1905

won't go—you couldn't treat us like that, now, could you, Mr. Lyndsay?"

He certainly could not resist the pretty coaxing of her voice and eyes. For a moment he put aside the mooted question, suffering himself to be decoyed out of doors by her for a long, exhilarating ramble around the place, and in the woods, where they roamed like happy children reckless of results. And while Mona and Lyndsay were tracing out a wood path beneath the pines, what a glad surprise to her to espy from afar, lumbering along the avenue, an antique illuminated omnibus of the fashion in vogue in Richmond long years ago, drawn by mules and containing sundry stores and dainties, under custody of old black Phoebe in a new and modish hat; and, best of all, Mona's own Mammy Clarissa, decently cowed in a thick old-time woolen hood, sniffing with scorn at her sister-in-law's youthful headgear!

To have Mammy Clary share her joy was the crowning touch, and Mona could hardly refrain from bursting from her greenwood covert with a cry of childish welcome. But at a pleading look from Lyndsay she let the convoy pass on unchallenged to the "Gret Hus."

"I'm afraid I'm selfish," the young man explained, "but, somehow, it's borne in on me that this is to be my last one little hour with you, uninterrupted."

"Who's to interrupt us?" she said, with a quick sigh. "In old days Harry would have called me off, or Lance—oh, poor Lance, he is my drop of bitter in the sweetest cup I have tasted for many a long month. When I think of him, my dear, brave, patient cousin, I am ashamed to be happy. I would give all this up without a pang if he could have it in my stead."

"Some day he will enjoy it with you," said the young man unsteadily.

Mona blushed, but made no reply. For the remainder of their walk a chill seemed to have come between them. Mona seemed dreamy and Lyndsay ill at ease.

The short afternoon was closing into dusk when the two young people finally retraced their steps to the house, entering it to find the fire in the hall reinforced by a huge pile of fresh logs; Mrs. Beaton, in her best gray silk, seated with her knitting to one side of it; an Angora cat and a couple of beautiful hounds dozing nearby; the general on his feet at a side table, mixing a mint julep; and, over all, an air of home comfort such as warmed the girl's sensitive heart. They tarried there a while to talk of the pleasant changes, then separated, Mona and Lyndsay to dress for a dinner to be served at six o'clock. Lyndsay, however, came back to explain to the Beatons that, contrary to his intentions, he had promised Miss Carlyle to remain over the next day; and he and the general exchanged a few confidential sentences upon another topic, going out together to listen upon the doorstep for sounds that evidently failed to strike their expectant ears.

"It can be only a delay," said the general with assurance as they came in again from the delicious frosty air. "I have arranged with Britannicus to have his seat placed at table, and if the worst comes to the worst he will surely join us later. Pity for your glorious plan to miscarry in the smallest particular, Lyndsay, but I feel confident the powers above are looking out for it and you."

And soon the little home party, supplemented by a few neighbors, war-worn but invincibly cheerful, in shabby clothes, with soft, slow voices and perfect adaptability to their surroundings, had gathered around the great table in the oak-paneled dining-room. Mrs. Beaton had insisted that Mona should take her mother's old seat at table, and the girl, assenting reluctantly, faced her father, who, refreshed and animated, but still, alas! without a trace of recollection of his true position in the house, had suffered Britannicus to lead him to his own armchair of carved mahogany. His meeting with Lyndsay had been bridged by Mr. Carlyle's complete unconsciousness that they two

had met before! He greeted the young man with high-flown courtesy, assuming to include him among a party of their neighbors.

As the meal progressed, Lyndsay and the Beatons casting many an anxious secret glance toward the door, the whole company came gradually under the famous old-time spell of Alexius Carlyle's personality as a host. With quips and cranks of acrid wit, tempered by the consideration of a genuinely hospitable soul toward honored guests, with gay stories and flooding reminiscence, the old man took and held easily the centre of all interest. Although it was impossible for his hearers not to notice that in his field of discourse he ignored late years, they attributed this to an unwillingness to sadden the occasion by reference to his cruel losses and changed life. Borne upon the current of his brilliant talk they laughed with him, applauding. Mona, who began to feel afraid, questioned with her eyes the old servant behind her father's chair, and read in his answering gaze like apprehension that further chilled her heart. But, unless through some rude and sudden break, both saw it was by now impossible to stem the tide, and she was beginning to long for the meal to end at any cost, when a servant, opening the door leading from the hall, hurried in with a whisper for General Beaton's ear.

"What is it?" asked Alexius, a trifle tart at this interruption to a story then engaging listeners.

General Beaton rose at once upon his feet.

"I have the honor, sir, to ask you to receive another guest," he said, a happy smile breaking down his attempt at formal speech.

"Of course; of course; ask him to come in. Go, Britannicus, and say that we are at table, or I should wait upon the gentleman myself. Any friend of General Beaton's——"

"A friend of yours, sir," went on the general, "one whom I dare believe will be nearer to your heart than any other man who could join you now."

The old man also rose. A dull flush

came into his face. His deep-set eyes questioned Beaton with pitiful eagerness.

"You don't mean it is Harry?" he stammered in a strange, unearthly voice. "Why, the lad wrote me they'd forbidden him a furlough. Lee told all the boys, including his own son, that they mustn't ask for one this year."

In the little thrill of sympathy that ran around the board Mona left her chair and flew to her father's side. Something had told her what was about to happen, and she dreaded while she rejoiced.

As with tender, filial words she broke to Mr. Carlyle the dear reality in store for him, she was thrust away impatiently while he stood a-quiver with tense excitement.

"Lance here? Lance? What brings him, when they wouldn't let Harry come?" he repeated querulously; and then, at a second opening of the door, a tall, vigorous young man in citizen's clothes, with keen, dark eyes and vivid coloring, his face radiating joy, came among them and, before greeting Mona, clasped the old man in his arms.

At that, what a glad chorus of welcomes, congratulations, wonderment was bestowed upon the wanderer! Lance was as if caught up in a fiery chariot of love and welcome home. Surrounded, pressed upon, lionized by his old friends and neighbors, he was the centre of cordial words and tender thoughts. Men laughed, women cried openly, no one could do or say enough to welcome this last spar floated safely ashore from the wreck of their dear Lost Cause.

Lyndsay, of all the joyous throng, felt alone, awkward and out of place. He was shrinking into the background, about to withdraw from the room, when Lance, going to him impetuously, drew him forward toward Mr. Carlyle, who had dropped exhausted into his chair.

"Here is the real author of my good luck, Cousin Alexius," he cried. "But for him, I'd have still been in quod for Christmas. It is he that planned and

carried out my getting here in time, and I'll take this occasion to say he's about the best fellow living and the one worthiest to stand at the Manor in your shoes. And I want everybody present to know it is Mr. Lyndsay who is the owner of Carlyle Manor now, in place of his uncle, who bought the property—I'm told by my friend Beaton that he's been letting you think him the agent instead of the proprietor. Don't back out, Lyndsay, man! Shake hands with my cousin instead and let him thank you for me and for our family for all the obligations we never can repay."

As Lance spoke all present were struck with the change that came over the face of Alexius Carlyle. He had clasped Lyndsay's hand, speaking a few courteous words in obedience to his kinsman's hint. Then the old man, curiously shrunken and shriveled, yet wearing a look of sad intelligence previously missing from his eyes, pulled himself painfully up by the table and stood in a commanding attitude, holding his wineglass in his hand.

There was a hush that none dared interrupt.

"My friends," said a feeble voice, coming as if from far away, "I have had many emotions to bear tonight, and I am not very strong. I have lost my dear wife and my beloved son, and am here in my birthplace and that of my father's fathers', as a stranger dependent upon the forbearing hospitality of its owner, Mr. Lyndsay, to whom we are all indebted for this—this—very happy occasion. I am old and broken with sorrows, as you see, and there is little to make life worth living for me, except the hope of the happiness of those who are to follow me. I want you to know of the especial delight the return of this dear one, who was lost and is found again, has brought to me—not in himself only, because he is the head of our house, the last of our line, and is to be the prop of my old age—but because between him and me there is soon to be a nearer, dearer tie. Lance, my dear son, come to me. Mona, my daughter,

let him take your hands. Now, friends and neighbors, glasses all! To the health of the happy pair!"

In the same strained silence they drank the toast proposed. While Lance stood with Mona's cold fingers in his clasp, and as troubled eyes watched Mr. Carlyle in dread of what might be yet to come, Alexius swayed and fell. Lyndsay, who was back of him, was first to catch the thin figure in his arms, transferring it to those of Lance and old Britannicus.

They carried the dying man into the chamber where he had first seen light, and there he ceased upon the midnight without pain.

XIII

IN the interval before Mr. Carlyle's funeral Lyndsay returned to Richmond, after earnestly beseeching Lance to consider himself owner of the Manor until the last sad ceremonies were over and Mrs. Beaton could convey Mona back to the house in town.

Lancelot accepted the offer as graciously as it was made. All that Lyndsay, with a delicacy so true and a sentiment so fine, had done for the family, culminating in a pressure brought to bear in such fashion upon Lancelot's affairs that the prisoner was set free in time for the Christmas gathering, stirred the full fountain of his gratitude.

Following his visit with Cecil Dare and Madame de Chercroix to the fortress, Lyndsay had obtained permission to see Carlyle several times on his own account. A delay in the order for release had necessitated further work from the prisoner's friends, and to this service, backed by powerful influence, Lyndsay had devoted his best powers. The meetings between the two men had resulted in the foundation of a friendship destined to endure, Lance responding with all the enthusiasm of his nature to the young Northerner's shy but steadfast overtures. And when, at last, with joy and hope bubbling over in his heart, Carlyle had

stood a free man outside his fortress prison, it was Lyndsay's aid that he felt to have been most potent in restoring him to liberty.

Of Cecil Dare's share in the enterprise he had resolved to think as little as he could. The pain he had given her in return for her generous devotion was still unbearably acute. It was only forced forgetting that would ever heal that smart!

He had heard from Cecil only once again. From Lyndsay he had ascertained that she had been engaged by Madame de Chercroix to go abroad with her as paid companion, and to Paris, in the late autumn, the two ladies had taken their flight, and Lance felt that things were better so. He was sure that Cecil cherished a vague, sad hope of somehow becoming reconciled to her unworthy mother, whose relations to her child he now clearly understood, since, upon leaving America, the girl had put into Lyndsay's hands, for him, a written statement of her motives in the drama of the night at Foxcroft, beseeching Colonel Carlyle to use this in case necessity should ever compel a fuller explanation of his own share in it. The paper, duly transmitted, had been read by Lance with eager interest and sympathy. Resolved never to help himself by inculpating her, he consigned it to destruction. The story of her fateful episode was nearly what he had supposed. She had come back to Virginia after her long sojourn with the good Sisters in New Orleans, upon an imperious summons from her mother to join her and sail for Europe. The notorious part Molly Ball had taken in the war, the evil repute of her scapegrace son, had been kept by the nuns from Cecil. She was surprised at the strange, rude fashion in which she found her family camping out in secret in the old barracks of a house the Dares had forsaken at the outbreak of the war; and dismayed by the change in her mother, still slim and dark and comely as a girl, but hard and reckless in speech and manner, with the red seam of a bullet wound upon her cheek. Far worse the sad reality that Cecil's old

idol, Selden, was now but a reckless, hopeless sot.

Then, the queer people who frequented them, always under shadow of the night, the mystery that hung around her mother's and Selden's nocturnal disappearances from home!

It was not long, however, that she was kept in doubt as to what black scheme Mrs. Dare was plotting, to be covered by a quick retreat from her native land.

From Selden in his cups—the weak, dissolute brother who still loved her in his way—Cecil learned dreadful truths: that her mother, the dauntless Molly Ball of the Confederacy, was now leader and director of a plot against the heads of Government, shortly to be launched like a thunderbolt; and that the meetings of the conspirators would terminate the day following in the scattering of certain papers of instruction, hidden at Foxcroft, among a band of desperate men, survivors of a struggle in which they had had no honorable part.

With all Cecil's gallant soul, she despised such crime, its methods and its instruments. To prevent the threatened catastrophe and to save her mother and brother from the consequences of their evil-doing, she nerved herself to do what had nearly ended in grim tragedy.

And when, after accomplishing the work—at such a cost to Lancelot Carlyle and to herself—she had guided Starlight—Molly Ball's mount in many a desperate ride during the war—safely home and had turned the mare into her stable, she did not further swerve from going straight to her mother's room to arouse the sleeping lioness and confess what she had done!

What followed was not written in the statement submitted to Lancelot Carlyle. It was inscribed indelibly upon the memory of Cecil Dare, who for the first time in her life saw her terrible mother as she was. The same day Mrs. Dare and her son abandoned Cecil and the country, leaving no trace of their movements and but a scant supply of money for Cecil's maintenance.

Then had come the tidings of Lancelot's arrest.

With the aid of an old negro woman Cecil had shut up the house and resorted to Washington, where during the long, dreary summer friends had arisen at her need. Nothing that anyone could do could have rid her of the burden she always carried, of yearning love and tenderness for the man she had so injured.

Because the reading of this narrative had warmed Lance's heart and quickened his pulse to fever heat, he had all the more steadfastly resolved to put Cecil out of mind. He thought he was glad at hearing she had left America! God helping him, when he next met the girl it would be without fear of disloyalty to his promised wife.

Now nothing remained in him, he believed, but the love Mona merited, a love plighted by her father's dying hand. He had come out of prison feeling like an eagle about to take his flight in ether. All things seemed possible to his bursting youth and strength. What though Mona and he began their new life poor as the poorest? He would take her to his heart and together they would challenge adverse Fate. She was the flower let blooming at his feet when her father had fallen like an oak tree crashed to earth. But Mona had sorrows of her own to conquer, and for many days after the funeral she lay broken and exhausted in bed in her old room at the Manor, unable to bear the removal to town and tended continually by Mrs. Beaton and Mammy Clarissa. Lyndsay, who felt that he could not with propriety intrude upon the family at this time, went back sorrowfully to Airedale.

Lance, distracted by new anxiety, moved back and forth between Richmond and the Manor, finding more than enough to occupy him in over-looking and settling the involved affairs of the estate. With troubled Mr. Chester he deplored the quixotic spirit that had led Alexius to give up, at this moment, all hold upon the purchase money paid by Mr. Sharpless for the place. For besides the town house,

which she must now sell or let, there was barely a pittance left for Mona's support. That Lance should marry his cousin at once and take her to Foxcroft to resume his experiment interrupted by disaster, presented itself to his judgment—and Mr. Chester's—as the only solution of their difficulty!

While Mona was convalescing, he broached this idea to Mrs. Beaton, and was disagreeably surprised by a certain blank look in the matron's kindly face, which she promptly made effort to supersede by one of sympathy for him.

The same day the loving, tormented, hypocritical lady, unknown to her husband, slipped a long letter into the post-bag addressed to Airedale, in Massachusetts.

Mrs. Beaton, between affection for Lancelot and Mona and loyalty to her employer, Lyndsay, whom she had adopted into her big heart as its ruler second only to the general, was, indeed, greatly put about. From the girl's half-conscious talk in illness she had gathered enough to show how far from ready was Mona to fulfil the troth-plight with her cousin, renewed by her father in the last solemn moments of his life. And when, additionally, certain impressions gathered from her talks about Lancelot with Cecil Dare during the long hours of their sojourn at the boarding-house in Washington forced themselves upon her memory, poor Mrs. Beaton felt convinced that still another loving heart would be wrecked by the proposed marriage and decided that the world was out of joint.

She ventured unsuccessfully to take the general into her confidence. He was all for the Carlyles, for the old Virginian idea of keeping together a family, and declared that this nonsense about Lyndsay did not matter really and that a year or two after the wedding with Lance Mona would be as happy as a queen.

While she was trembling in secret, but still rejoiced over her rash achievement in hinting at facts to Lyndsay, the bubble of Mrs. Beaton's sentimental

hopes was pricked by his letter in return. A charming letter—a noble letter, she considered it, but definite in assuring her that he had withdrawn altogether from the field. He did not attempt to hide what he felt for Mona. Rather was he relieved to pour it out in a rich, full stream upon sympathetic soil. But Lyndsay was not made of the yielding sort, where he considered principle to be involved, and the scene when Mona's poor little cold hand had been laid in her cousin's publicly had been also the final chapter of his love for her!

When Mona was well and strong enough to take the decision of her life into her own hands, Mrs. Beaton made her ready for a necessary talk with Lancelot, who had come out from town to spend a night at the Manor and settle matters with his cousin before leaving for Foxcroft to look after his interests at the farm.

They had ensconced the fair invalid in the corner of a great carved sofa across one end of the fireplace in the hall, with a Chinese screen behind her to keep off drafts and on one side a fire of logs burning cheerily.

Mona and Lance sat facing each other, each with a strong resolve at heart, both willing to talk for a while of other things before broaching the subject uppermost in thought. Finally Lancelot, taking courage, told Mona the result of his investigation of her father's affairs and of his own paucity of fortune. Truth to tell, he was a beggar come to her for alms, since there had been a fair offer for her house in town, which would put her in funds for the immediate future, while he must needs go back to the farm in order to wring subsistence from the soil. "So you see, dear," he ended, smiling, "that when I ask if you'll marry me now, it is really a presumptuous thing, since you'll be the moneyed member of the firm. But you need me to take care of you, and I need your love and help. It was your father's last wish for us—and I think we'd be doing right."

"To do right seems to me all that's

worth while now," she answered sadly. "Oh, Lance, why should I beat about the bush, or try to find words to tell you something that weighs on me day and night? Try to help me by understanding what it is. If I married you, just because I'd promised my dear father, there'd be always between us this thing that I never dreamed of until it came to me unsought. I have lain here for days, praying against it, fighting it, striving to crush it down, but I can't, I can't—dear Lance, indeed I can't!"

Lance looked at her in astonishment. He had never seen such fire in her eye, such a light upon her face. For the first time it flashed upon him what Lyndsay's unselfish service to him and to their household had meant. His first feeling was one of pain and, despite him, some distaste. For a moment he could not find the smallest word to say.

"You're not vexed with me, Lance?" Mona plead piteously. "I couldn't do anything but tell you, to be honest, could I? And feeling so, I couldn't do you the wrong of letting you take me to be your wife. No, no, I wouldn't dare. But I can fight it still, and I will. Some day I shall conquer, but till then—oh, can't you understand?"

Her head dropped into hands that could not hide the crimson welling up. Lancelot sprang upon his feet, a great throb of relief in his overburdened heart. To regain control of himself he walked rapidly across the hall and stood looking out of the window into the rime-frosted woods. Had she answered as he had confidently believed she would do, he had meant to tell her of the woman who was her rival in his heart—the lovely vanished woman of whom he had heard never a word since she quitted America, whom he had resolved never to think of more! Now, his ideas were tumultuously thrown together and confused. One thing only was clear and unchangeable. Mona would have none of him as a lover. Her heart, unlike his, was not to be given elsewhere than into the keeping of its true owner. A sense of

shame shot through him that in this ordeal her soul had risen above his.

She came over to join him at the window, slipping her hand within his arm, and he marveled to see how the woman in her had supplanted the child he had left behind. She plead with him to be forbearing of her weakness and never to speak of it again. Anything would be better than for them to fail now in full understanding of each other's lives and motives.

"And, oh! Lance, dear Lance, if only you forgive me," she ended, with a brightening face, "I believe we may both come to bless this hour when we had the courage to decide to live apart."

It was like a woman, to put aside her own hopeless love. Lance could not be so content. He acquiesced in her decision, the news of the rupture of their engagement was given out to their common friends, and after doing his utmost to serve Mona and help her upon her chosen way, he set out again for Foxcroft, reaching there to find the house, fired the night before by incendiaries, but a smoldering ruin, his barn and farm implements destroyed, and poor Jerry Trimble, his faithful henchman, lying crippled in the cabin of Mars and Dilsey, whose wits were almost gone through fright!

A month later Lancelot Carlyle had joined in the procession of Fortune's swordsmen from the South who at the close of the Civil War circled the globe in their search for adventure. He served under divers flags before coming to a halt in Egypt, where the events of his remarkable career made a page of history apart from this chronicle, and lifted him without delay into the full light of contemporaneous favor with his adopted master, the Khedive, as with the public.

XIV

It seemed almost a nursery dream to Carlyle Bey in the full, rich life that came to him after he settled down in Egypt, that fancy of his that he could have married his dear little stay-at-home cousin and gone to farming at

poor old Foxcroft! Never to have tasted this! Never to have known the East in his blood, to have lived in this human kaleidoscope!

He had kept in touch with home enough to know that Mona was "well and busy and cheerful." So Mrs. Beaton wrote and Mona confirmed. But it seemed so far away! He believed himself perfectly content. But now and then recollections smote him like a two-edged sword. At the mere thought of a girl standing before a dim mirror knotting above her head the weight of her red-gold tresses—or standing with her arm linked in his, facing the men who would have hung her mother—or again, looking at him with sudden woe in her joyous eyes, from the far side of his prison bars—the tough soldier would start and shiver like a horse coming into the presence of a bear.

Cecil was not forgotten, though the habit of submission to keen disappointment had so mastered his life he believed himself resigned to have let her go out of it.

Following the break of his engagement with Mona, he had deemed it right to inform Cecil of the fact without asking for any answer. Later on, he had sent her a letter, pouring out his love and praying that she would let him come to her, no matter where, but to this also there was no response. He had thought himself cured of vain regret when he came upon an American newspaper announcing the marriage of Madame de Chercroix, of New Orleans, with Colonel Richard Claxton, of Newport and New York. It was a revival of a boy-and-girl affair, the journal added, among the first of the "reconstruction matches," as they were called, and the couple had gone abroad to spend the winter in Paris.

Lance, who was just then expecting orders for a special mission in Paris from his master, the Khedive, felt a rush of quite unreasoning hope that he might run upon Cecil's former friend and patroness somewhere, and at least rend the veil of absolute silence surrounding the girl he loved. The same

day a man, sitting at tea with him on the terrace at Shepherd's, happened to mention the odd story of an ex-Confederate spy—a pretty woman with a stirring history, who carried the mark of a Federal bullet—having been married by an old Frenchman of rank and wealth, wholly fascinated by her charms, and thus translated into the ranks of good society in Paris. Both the names of husband and wife had escaped the speaker, but Lance had a sudden wild idea that the heroine in question must be Cecil's mother, "Molly Ball"!

Perhaps Cecil, too, was married and safe in the shelter of a home. But he could not hope so, heaven help him; no, not yet! The opportunity for satisfying his anxiety on these points came sooner than he had dared expect. He reached Paris in time to be present at one of the official receptions at the Tuileries, whose salons at that date were almost the only common social meeting ground possible to the ex-Confederates and their victors of the North. It is to be feared that rancor, subdued by conventionality, animated the breasts of too many Americans in gala attire who pressed together to pay their respects to Louis Napoleon and his beautiful Eugénie. The old Creole families of New Orleans, intermarried with and well rooted in the best world of France, gave the Confederate exiles various opportunities of asserting themselves in good society, independent of the offices of a Minister of the United States.

A brilliant scene, that of a general reception by the sovereigns in the last flowery days of the Second Empire. But as Carlyle Bey mounted the fifty steps of the grand staircase, at either end of which stood one of the emperor's statuesque Cent Gardes, he was but little stirred by the theatrical splendor that surrounded him. He had been part of too many foreign pageants to find in them novelty or excitement; and as soon as he should have made his bow before their majesties meant to go comfortably back to his hotel and smoke.

He did not pass unobserved. Even in this mixed congeries of races and nationalities the tall, rather somber young man in the uniform of the Khedive's service obtained notice for his remarkable good looks and indifference to comment.

That he was no Oriental was plain to see, although the touch of olive in his complexion and the Southern languor of his eyes, that seemed at the outset of the evening to be weary of what they looked upon, dashed somewhat the suggestion of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Lance was quite unaware that the gaze of one fair lady in particular had followed and dwelt upon him with persistency. He did not therefore observe that she was contriving with dexterity to steer her companion, a stately *vieux moustache* of a courtier wearing a red ribbon in his buttonhole, until the crush brought them close to Carlyle's side. Nor did he look at her until it appeared that her lace had caught upon some portion of his accoutrements and they were bound together by its threads of gossamer. As he apologized in form he saw that the lady was no longer young, but lithe and graceful in her build, with black eyes of piercing luster, and black hair worn close to a small, spirited head, beneath a coronet of magnificent rubies. Jewels flashed elsewhere about her person, and she trailed after her a robe of white velvet as if disdaining to lift it from contact with the tramp of feet.

For an instant he met her gaze, and something about it knocked at the doors of his memory. He almost fancied that she was studying his face. Then the costly lace still refusing to come away, she tore it with a vixenish gesture and a stamp of the small foot. As they parted and she bowed in answer to his farewell, he observed that her beauty was marred by a small but distinctly red cicatrix across one cheek.

The old gentleman who accompanied her laughed at her impatience in tearing the lace, but laughed indulgently. Some little time after the

Khedive's envoy had paid his respects to the emperor and empress and was turning away, he heard his name spoken, to be further confronted by this same polite personage whom he had seen conducting the heroine of the ruby diadem and uncertain temper.

"It seems that Carlyle Bey is an *Américain du Sud*," said the suave stranger, "and that madame, *ma femme*, claims him as an old friend as well as a compatriot. I am hoping, therefore, that we may induce him to give us the pleasure of his company at supper at our *hôtel* tonight, at any time after twelve. I am the Comte de Marbois, monsieur, and fame has already introduced to me the distinguished soldier whom so many armies have been proud to inscribe upon their rolls of honor."

Decidedly, there was no resisting such courtesy, and Lance found himself, after a short talk, pledged to accept the count's invitation. His attention diverted by other acquaintances, they parted before he had made the least approach toward discovering where he had known *Madame la Comtesse*. Of what Southern family of his acquaintance she had sprung did not suggest itself. He was certain that he could never have liked her. An antipathy, long dormant, seemed to have been aroused into active life by her vicinity, and already Lance repented him that he had weakly yielded to the old count's civility.

While thus meditating, he was addressed again by name. On a bench near the principal stairs of exit, where she sat as if waiting for someone to rejoin her, he saw the handsome form and gracious countenance of the late Madame de Chercroix, now Mrs. Richard Claxton. She held out her hand to him, his face lost its cloud, and he greeted her with almost boyish warmth.

"I never supposed you would remember me," she said. "But you had been pointed out to us this evening, and my husband had just decided to go back and look you up to ask you to dine with us."

"One isn't likely to forget such hospitality as you once showed me in New Orleans, even if the last time you were good enough to try to look me up at Fort Delaware was not a success. What you did then, Mrs. Claxton, for a ragged-bearded prisoner of war put me under a debt of lasting gratitude, and I have often longed for an opportunity to meet and thank you in person. But first my congratulations upon your marriage. Claxton is—well, you know better than I do what he is—"

"Truly I do, and on that point there is nothing more to say."

"He is associated in my thoughts with his visits long ago at the Manor—with the happiest time I ever spent in old Virginia—that is, almost the happiest time, for the four years of war had their compensations. May I sit on the end of your little bench till your husband returns?"

"Please do, if I am not keeping you from something better. Of course, you won't refuse to dine at the apartment we've taken for our stay in Paris, but in the meantime this isn't half a bad moment to talk of certain things that overflow my thoughts when I look at you."

He winced, but met her gaze bravely, taking his place at her side upon the margin of crimson velvet left exposed by the soft overflow of her skirts of manifolded tulle.

"Unfortunately, I have but a few days in Paris and must return as soon as my mission is accomplished. But whenever it is possible I shall always rejoice to be your beneficiary."

"You told me that so charmingly in your letter at the time I have felt well repaid. It was my first and only effort at political wire-pulling, and I was on my mettle to succeed, and, after all, Mr. Lyndsay did the most. But for you to be freed and reach home only for a tragedy, instead of the happy holiday we hoped for—that was very, very sad."

His brow clouded again for a moment, then cleared.

"At the time, as you say, it cut deep.

But the years are merciful, if few, and I have had so much since, I must regret nothing in the past."

The strains of a Strauss waltz floated to them from the adjoining *salle*. People came and went, some who knew the lady hesitating as if with a desire to make one of her always charmed circle, then passed on, smiling to see her absorption in the handsome stranger.

During their talk so far both had been skirting the edge of things that neither knew how to approach openly. The return of Mr. Claxton in search of his wife, his hearty pleasure in meeting with Lancelot, their animated chat concerning Mona and other subjects of mutual interest were a welcome diversion. The tactful lady felt that she needed time to understand the way the land lay. Before they parted she had engaged Carlyle to dine with them next day, and it was at the moment of seeing the pair about to descend the staircase to their carriage that he bethought him to consult Claxton as to the odd invitation forced upon him to sup with the Comte and Comtesse de Marbois.

The effect was so sudden as to seem electrical. Claxton looked at his wife, his wife looked at Claxton. Both made no attempt to conceal their embarrassment.

"You met her face to face? You had no suspicion who she is?" finally asked Claxton.

"Nothing but vague and far-away remembrance, and a very decided sense that I wanted to see no more of her."

"My dear fellow, what I shall tell you is only whispered in this seething whirlpool of mixed American society around us. Many of your Southerners here deny the charges against her, and extol her as a representative *grande dame* of ancient Virginian lineage. But we happen to know better. This Comtesse de Marbois, whose husband, a rich, amiable old *boulevardier*, who knows nothing and cares less about what happened in the wilds of remote America, is none

other than your famous spy-woman, the notorious Molly Ball, and the mother of Cecil Dare."

"Richard!" interposed his wife as Carlyle drew a long, hard breath.

"Nonsense, dear, why should we protect her? There are too many make-believes afloat in Paris now. I have no patience with the fools who accept them without protest. I consider this one a scandal to society, and Carlyle Bey, of all people, has certainly no reason to treat her with consideration."

"Can it be that Miss Dare is living with her now?" asked Lancelot, trying to recover his equanimity.

"No; but it is too long and sad a story to tell here," answered the lady. "When my poor, dear Cecil left me to join her mother I felt sure that the arrangement would not last. Then circumstances—not to the mother's credit—forced her to separate from Mrs. Dare, and she went away—even from me. I have actually no idea where to find her; but she writes me from time to time to say she is well."

"Has she means sufficient for her support?" asked Lance.

"Oh, that's the only bright spot in the situation. Through the cleverness of Mr. Lyndsay, apparently the good genius of everyone in whom he takes an interest, it was discovered that some real estate out West, bequeathed to Cecil by her father's will, was of good and growing value. Lyndsay had found out about it in some of his own explorations into his queer uncle's many purchases of land and building lots. He managed the sale of it for Cecil as soon as she came of age, and I'm afraid that was chiefly the reason of Mrs. Dare's sudden desire to have her child again under her wing—"

"My dear, I don't want to hurry you, but you are overtired and our carriage is waiting," said Claxton, interrupting. "Tomorrow evening you and Carlyle Bey may talk of these interesting matters to your hearts' content. My wife thinks I am not always sympathetic, Carlyle, about her *rara avis*, Cecil Dare, but, charming as the

girl is, one can never forget she's the daughter of Molly Ball."

Carlyle accompanied his friends down the staircase, heard "*Les gens de Monsieur le Colonel Claxton*" called by the waiting lackeys in a succession of stentorian roars, and saw the newly married pair drive away down a lane of mounted guards, between bonfires kindled in the frozen streets. Then, ordering his own carriage, he returned to his hotel to pen and send off a polite excuse for his non-appearance at the little supper of the Countess of Marbois.

Far into the night he pondered. The years rolled back like an unfolded scroll. The meeting with kind Mrs. Claxton, tidings, however unsatisfactory, concerning Cecil, and, above all, his astonishing encounter with Mrs. Dare, the original source of his long exile from home and friends, had effectually banished sleep. That woman! His amazement at her presumption in accosting him was exceeded by his stupor of surprise in finding her so transformed. The spectacle of Molly Ball wearing the ancestral coronet of an authenticated aristocrat, asserting herself as a real great lady at a dubious court, was, of all the suites of war within his ken, the most remarkable!

Her motive in trying to bring him into her acquaintance was unfathomable. For escaping the snare he had to thank Fortune and the late Madame de Chercroix. But Cecil—where and how should he find her? For he must.

The Claxtons' little dinner of three went far toward dispelling the vapors engendered by Lancelot's vigil overnight. While the meal progressed Carlyle was continually wondering why a pair so well assorted as his hosts had been kept apart so long. The dominant impression conveyed by their marriage was that of harmony and loving interdependence.

Coffee had hardly been served when Claxton, asking to be excused to write letters for the American mail, took himself off into his own sanctum, leaving his wife and Carlyle together in

the salon. Mrs. Claxton, who had seen that her guest was unusually distraught and perturbed, wondered whether it would not have been better for Dick to stand by her during the talk that must ensue. Her apprehension was dissipated by the young Virginian's first words when they were left alone.

"I wonder if I may tell you—?" he began disconnectedly—"I have been longing to tell both of you, but dared not—of a most extraordinary experience that befell me, just before coming here tonight."

"Let me guess," she answered. "It had something to do with the dashing lady whom poor old infatuated Marbois has put at the head of his establishment?"

"You are quite right. Nothing more nor less than a visit from her at my hotel—an astonishing visit. You might have thought her a saddened and noble wreck of the Southern cause—an exiled patriot, full of lofty sentiments and ideals. Really, she almost persuaded me to think myself a callous and unrelenting villain, thirsting for unworthy revenge."

"I can quite understand it," said Mrs. Claxton, a little haughty chill coming into her voice, "even although I have not the advantage of ever having consented to meet the Comtesse de Marbois."

"She upbraided me with the unkindness of my refusal to allow her to hold out the olive branch—said I was the last person in her thoughts when she had made use of my house in her country's service—her country's service, good Lord, and she just escaping with her neck! But I forget—you cannot know—"

"Would it help you to know that Cecil Dare, my brave, dear Cecil, who left me for a reason connected with this person of whom we speak, and has kept away through shame of the connection—once told me the whole story of your meeting at Foxcroft?"

"Did she? Thank heaven! Then I can rid my mind by free speech at last. Understand me, Mrs. Claxton, I have never been a harsh judge of the

young lady's share in that lamentable adventure——”

“Oh, I am sure of that,” interrupted his hostess warmly. “Cecil, poor darling, made me realize that you were only too good and forgiving——”

She stopped and bit her lip. She remembered that she was there to listen, not to confide.

“But I despise the mother as a detestable reminder of the most poignant trial of my life; to have her breathe the same air with me is an offense, and I believe she has some design upon my peace. It appears she has kept *au courant* of my movements in the world——”

“Most of us have,” said Mrs. Claxton politely. “You have really had all the glory one man deserves.”

“You are kinder than I deserve,” the man answered, becomingly modest. “The Comtesse de Marbois owns that she has been ‘looking out for me’ to arrive in Paris. Her husband—heaven save the mark!—is ‘longing’ to make my acquaintance. She ended in a flood of cordial reminiscences of my cousin, Julian Carlyle, who, in the old days, once took me to her home in Virginia, and adjures me to come to her *hôtel* tomorrow evening to meet ‘a few of the faithful,’ who will unite in lamentations over our fallen hopes. What am I to think?”

“That is a part of her present pose,” said Mrs. Claxton, the vexed color rising into her face. “I agree with you in thinking her overtures hide some special intention. I should forewarn you, however, that I am really no competent critic of the Comtesse de Marbois, since she cherishes the most violent form of feminine antagonism to me, partly through jealousy of Cecil, but mainly because I have repeatedly declined to let anyone present her to my acquaintance.”

“Do you think it not possible her daughter may be with her now?”

“I think not. I will tell you all I know. Some of it, perhaps, never came under your consideration. For a time following the war Mrs. Dare was floating through the Southern

Colony in Paris, living no one knew how, miserably shabby, eager for every lift in a cab, or a theatre ticket given by some compassionate acquaintance. Cecil, who was then with me, never saw her except by accident, and yet I know the girl was in the habit of sharing what salary she got from me, presumably with her mother. Then, as I told you, our friend, Donald Lyndsay, who had undertaken to look up Cecil's claim to those city lots in Chicago coming to her by her father's will, reported a surprising piece of good luck for my dear girl. The property had increased substantially in value, and Lyndsay's judicious management had made of Cecil a little heiress, as such things go.”

“I am most truly glad for her,” he said.

“But wait—the moment this got about among the hand-to-mouth people Mrs. Dare knew—flotsam of the war, professors of patriotism, not patriots—Cecil began to receive overtures toward reconciliation with her mother. She admitted to me also woeful happenings to her brother Selden, who was writing from Mexico for aid. Between them the other Dares managed to witch away from her a large sum. Finally, last season, there came a crisis in Mrs. Dare's affairs. I had known that she represented herself to Cecil as on the verge of making a good marriage, could some sort of income be assured in order to keep up her fiction of being a Virginian aristocrat receiving *rentes* from her estates. Cecil wrote to America for another large amount of money, which she distinctly never spent upon herself. Then came to me the astounding announcement of the Dare woman's actual marriage with the old Comte de Marbois. They had started upon a wedding journey to Italy, at the conclusion of which Cecil was invited to live with them permanently. At this juncture the poor child found out a feature of Mrs. Dare's recent life that filled her with shame and misery. What had been fear and dread before was now made certainty. The money

wrung from Cecil had been used by her mother to buy the silence of a needy and unscrupulous lover, who had taken this occasion to apply to her child for more."

Lancelot uttered an exclamation of disgust.

"One can understand how this knowledge affected Cecil and made her shrink from her former friends, feeling herself beyond the pale of respectable associates. God knows how gladly I would have sheltered her!"

"That, then, was why she failed to answer my second letter!"

"I fancy so. Both of them, as you remember, were sent to my care and were delivered to her. I would not have ventured to speak of this unless you had led the way. Forgive me if I go too far—but, as long ago as our visit to Fort Delaware, I could not help seeing what you were to her."

"You think so? I was not mistaken?"

Lancelot had never thought to loosen the floodgates of his love as he did upon this hint. Mrs. Claxton listened patiently, even eagerly. She agreed with him that he must leave no stone unturned to find Cecil's whereabouts. The remainder of his stay in Paris was spent in a futile search, and when dejectedly compelled to return to his post in Egypt, he left the matter in charge of an elderly ex-Confederate officer, whose zeal in the service of a friend was aided by a veneration for a Southern woman in distress that age could not wither nor custom stale.

A month later Carlyle Bey, standing on the terrace at Shepherd's with a group of friends, opened a letter from his *chargé d'affaires* in Paris, only to find, to his disappointment, that Miss Dare, actually traced to a residence in Tours, had given up her abode in that place, and returned to Paris, where all track of her was lost. Several weeks dragged by, and letters exchanged by Mrs. Claxton and himself speculated sadly upon the delay in their common hope; when out of a clear sky came one morning to Carlyle a missive

from the Comtesse de Marbois. He read with varying sentiments the tidings it conveyed, and in the next few days, obtaining a special leave, sailed from Alexandria to Marseilles, and from thence took a train to Paris.

XV

OVER at last the long uncertainty, the chilling, deadening silence, the fear both had cherished that they would never exchange speech again! They had met with constraint, she with the wild fear of the hunted animal in her eyes when she faced him. They had talked of commonplaces, her gaze gradually sinking before his, her breath coming quicker, the pure joy in her veins bubbling like the sap in the trees around them.

It was early spring, and Lance had found her living with an old French lady, deaf and meek, her angelic countenance framed in ripples of silver hair, whom Cecil had taken to be her comrade in a flowery villa in Neuilly just outside the Bois de Boulogne, where the foliage of its trees dripped over their garden wall.

The little inclosure, where she had been at work amid her daffodils and jonquils, was bright with sunshine and alive with nest-building sparrows. The cheerfulness and stir of a Paris morning were everywhere manifest beyond the gilded railings that shut them away from the busy boulevard. A horse-chestnut spread its tender green and rosy spires above her head. She had lost nothing of her imperial beauty, the shade of her wondrous hair was undimmed, her complexion dazzling as of old, but he was conscious that he would do almost anything in the world to bring back again her free and fearless bearing—to banish from her face that shrinking look, born of another's shame.

She did not ask him how he had thus found her, "after long grief and pain." She knew of him and the proud new name he had won as a soldier, and her pride in it shone forth unrestrained

by artifice. They talked, while old Mademoiselle Rosine sat in a *berceau* and knitted peacefully, and, by and bye, the marvel came to pass that is so often worked by Mother Nature in behalf of her young. Two hearts trembling toward each other met in an interchange of looks, and, without premeditation, without effort, blended in the sweet, eternal union of tried and tested love. And then Cecil Dare, straightening her shoulders, threw off once and for all the burden she had borne, and knew herself to be the equal, honored and coveted, of the man she had loved so long!

When it was necessary for this abnormally protracted first call to close, and for Carlyle Bey to arouse his slumbering *cocher* from his perch on the *fiacre* outside the gate, promising to return with Mrs. Claxton at the earliest possible moment after the second *déjeuner*, Lance held Cecil's hand for a moment closely, looking into her eyes.

"You have not asked me how I found you out."

"I never thought. It seemed so natural."

"Dearest, we have had our hour of pure sunshine; there is a sorrow yet in store for you. This letter, which you must read after I leave—it will hurt you, but you are brave—reached me in Egypt a few days since, and was the cause of my coming to find you. It tells me, among other things, Cecil, of your brother's death in Mexico."

She grew pale, but shed no tears.

"Once that would have been a bitter grief, but now—ah! poor Selden! To think we loved each other so! It was good of you to come yourself to tell me."

The letter placed in her hand was not opened until her lover had gone out of her sight. Even then she lingered, loath to break the spell of the wondrous hours just past. At last, going away from the kisses and mute congratulations of Mademoiselle Rosine, she shut herself in her own room and took out of an envelope, addressed to her in Lancelot's hand, an inclosure,

to her dismay, in her mother's handwriting!

The fiery blood surged into Cecil's cheeks; she threw the letter on the floor. This horror to come between her and her moment of purest joy in life! Lance in communication with the Comtesse de Marbois, the bare thought of whom in her insolent pomp of prosperity brought a fresh wave of humiliation to her child's heart! How dared she interfere between them? What mischief might she not have already wrought?

Ah! Cecil had had enough of the woman who had given her birth! Never, never would she look upon her face again. And if she had juggled Cecil's affairs with Lancelot——!

The thought of Selden calmed her suddenly. Still fearing, but softened, she picked up the letter and read these words:

LANCELOT CARLYLE:

All the misery I ever brought upon you, or others, has come back to me now, and you may, if you like, rejoice. I am a wretched woman deserted by one ungrateful child, and mourning in secret, where his existence is not known, the secret loss of the other. I have just heard that my son, the only person I ever loved except myself, has died, no need to tell you how, under Juarez in Mexico. It was not a glorious death, but I would give all I possess to have been near him and received him in my arms. This letter is to inform you that although I do not desire to see her, I am willing now to contribute what I can to my daughter's happiness. I know you have long loved her and that she has returned your love, but that she would not a second time sacrifice you to me. If you are not ashamed to claim her, you will find Cecil at Villa —, Avenue de Neuilly, Paris, living with an old frump of a chaperon who would drive me wild, except that she is a shade better than that sanctimonious Mrs. Claxton. Although you may not believe me, this is what I had meant to tell you when I begged you to come to me, and you gave me the go-by, a little while ago. I am writing to you while my heart is soft and sore about my boy. If I waited I might repent. I will never trouble you again. I have the honor to be, monsieur,

Your obedient servant,
MARY, COMTESSE DE MARBOIS.

Again in Richmond on a day of spring, the same blue sky arching overhead, around him the same redundancy of buds and flowers and leafage

that had greeted Private Lyndsay when he rode in with the conquering army in '65.

The smoke wreaths of the great fire had drifted into space, the crash and clatter of bursting shells had died upon the ear, and save for the scarred voids in city blocks and a general sense of inactivity unstirred by returning progress, Lyndsay saw little trace of the tremendous tragedy heralding his advent to the town.

He had had occasion to realize, upon previous visits, how deep-seated and dreary was the depression left by war. In the business relations formed as a property-holder in a neighboring county, where he had won golden opinions from squirearchy and employees around him, Lyndsay had sometimes touched despair of a higher level in the fortunes of Virginia in his day.

But today, for some occult reason, every aspect of Richmond was transfigured and shone with a light that never was on sea nor land.

Instead of pushing on to Goochland, as his wont was upon arrival—to the Manor, where the Beaton's were urgently anxious to exhibit to him a son and heir lately come to gladden their cheerful souls—he directed his footsteps into the street where he had once walked wearing a private's uniform, carrying a weapon for the defense of a young person who tripped ahead of him, with lips compressed and a world of stern resolve in her soft, dark eyes! How the very bricks of the old pavement joined together to sing of Mona as he passed! He could see her lithe figure hastening under the fire-flakes to the rescue of her threatened home, and feel again his first joy and wonder in her companionship!

Many months had elapsed since his last glimpse of her. Lyndsay had worked hard and prospered amazingly, and the people of his neighborhood at Airedale had lately elected him to represent them in the seats of the nation's legislators during the ensuing session of Congress.

He had grown broader in bulk and knowledge of mankind, had roamed

sufficiently in foreign parts to part with his shyness and occasional resentment of conventionalities that be. But whatever, in becoming a personage, Lyndsay had put aside or forgotten, nothing had robbed him of his high purpose, his stalwart determination, his clean mind and the poetry of his nature. The bias given to his susceptible days of adolescence by the encounter with the Carlyles had ever since colored his thoughts, and still embodied for him all romance of the truer, tenderer sort.

That he had kept his distance from Mona, with no attempt to show the worship of her that had so long secretly possessed him, was esteemed by Mrs. Beaton a mystery unexplainably tormenting. From time to time they had met, although never again at the Manor, and—on the occasion of what Mrs. Beaton called "a trip Nawth," to which the general and his spouse had treated themselves, inviting Miss Carlyle to accompany them—they had all stopped between two trains, to take luncheon with Lyndsay at Airedale. If Mona had been delighted with the house, its situation, surroundings and equipments, Mrs. Beaton left it actually groaning that she could see no prospect of installing Mona there as its mistress. But the least hint on this subject to Mona was always treated with discouraging reserve; and as to Lyndsay, Mrs. Beaton had long ago discovered there were certain subjects upon which neither playfulness nor serious appeal could pave the way to an approach through him. "He is not cross, he is not rude, when one speaks of his getting him a wife; he simply shuts up like a clam!" had declared the all-managing but in this case unsuccessful vice-regent of Carlyle Manor.

When Lyndsay ran up the high old house-steps where grass still grew in tufts between the marble steps, and rang at the modern bell superseding the use of the dragon knocker upon the door, he became conscious of odd sounds proceeding from within. There was dance music rippling upon the air, a frou-frou of soft materials,

the trip of little mice-like feet over a waxed floor, somebody beating time and counting one, two, three—a subdued murmur of children's happy voices accompanying all. At the rear of the spacious hall, its open door framed in green leaves against which their heads stood out in rich relief, sat a row of negro nurses, awaiting summons. Their dark brown or light taffy-tinted faces, their slender or portly persons, were no longer set forth by the "befo' de wah" turbans, kerchiefs and aprons. Instead of these badges of former servitude they wore smartly fashioned gowns and hats in cheap materials, reproducing the current styles, but all adjusted with taste and nicely considerate of hue. One might have thought them a row of tulips adorning the old black settee in the corner of the hall.

And beyond this human parterre Lyndsay caught a glimpse of his garden of old delights. It was unchanged, even to the trellised pergola with its trumpets of honeysuckle crowding in through the grapevines under which he had helped to carry Mona's mother for shelter from the fire. The shrubs and creepers he had trained and tended had grown luxuriantly, and against the ivied wall at the far end he saw springing in white splendor the successors of those lilies into one of which the humming-bird had crept to be imprisoned overnight.

But what was the meaning of the fairy-like stir and the music in the still, old house?

Britannicus, older, grayer, with a deeper parenthesis of wrinkles inclosing his shorn lips, came at this moment in answer to the visitor's ring. As he passed the bench of waiting nursery-maids the veteran bowed like a courtier. The women giggled, whispered and poked one another, amid flashing ivories and dancing eyebeams; for Britannicus was ever *persona grata* with the fair, as well as head centre in the religious club called "Lilies-of-the-Valley," to which the elect of Richmond's dark society belonged.

When the old man saw who it was

upon the front porch his manner underwent a sudden change. He lost his jaunty tread, his head turned apprehensively in the direction whence the festal sounds issued, his countenance assumed an apologetic look. One would have thought him overcome with sudden inexplicable shame. He greeted Lyndsay with respectful affection as of yore, then hemmed and hawed, in answer to the query if Miss Carlyle were at home.

"Yas, sir, Miss Mona's here, sir; I won't deceive you, Mr. Lyndsay. And she wouldn't miss you for the world and all," he answered cordially; "but——"

Again that shamefaced glance toward the drawing-room. The music within had changed to a joyous march. The little footsteps became more audible, striking the floor smartly in time to it.

"They'se just about ending, sir," went on the man, "and if you'd not mind stepping into the library to wait for Miss Mona——"

"A party of children, eh? Of course I will not intrude. I will come back later."

"Not a party adzackly, Mr. Lyndsay, sir," was the pained answer.

Britannicus had by this time engineered the caller into the dusky library and had waved him to a chair.

Upon a mahogany stand at Lyndsay's elbow stood a Chinese bowl of fresh rose-leaves, a pretty, old-fashioned fancy of Southern homes that seemed to breathe of Mona's recent touch.

"I might as well own up to you, Mr. Lyndsay," said the negro, standing before him. "This here bobberation of children in my mistiss's best parlor is a thing I advised agin, as long as I could speak. But," he swallowed once or twice, "Miss Mona, she gets sot in her way sometimes, and when a friend o' hers got this idea o' opening a dancing-class for the children of their friends—only their own friends, Mr. Lyndsay——"

Here Britannicus was overcome again.

"A dancing class? I understand. Why, Britannicus, old man, don't be a fool at your time of life. It seems to me the prettiest of trades."

They were interrupted by Mona running in, with extended hand, to welcome her guest.

"I thought it was nobody's voice but yours," she exclaimed. "How glad I am you're in time to see our final march of the innocents. Do come to the door and take a peep at it. We *are* proud of what we have made the darlings learn."

A different Mona this, from his stricken heroine of former days! A bright, alert Mona, healthily happy in her work, living for every day and for others, looking not back at the dead past but pressing forward in constant effort to fashion her future cheerily. A beautiful Mona, too, he noted with jealous eyes—more lovely in her ripe development of young womanhood than ever in the time of her slender immaturity. A golden mist seemed to arise before Lyndsay's eyes.

He had spoken to Mona of his feelings once before, soon after Colonel Lancelot had spurred away, like Lord Lovel in the ballad, "far countries for to see." It had been only a hint of his great love for her, light as a butterfly poising upon a flower. But Mona had turned upon him the sorrow of her starry eyes, and he read there that his time had not yet come. Afterward, he had thought it best to remain away from her, meeting from time to time on the footing of good friends. Mona, who had at first repulsed him out of a complex feeling of disloyalty to her dead father and her dead Cause, had always kept what she felt about her own action strictly to herself. No living soul was in her confidence. Mrs. Beaton, having found out what she knew unknown to Mona, had long given up hope that the matter would come to anything; and like a wise woman, held her tongue concerning her regrets. She had, indeed, continued to urge upon Lyndsay during his periodical visits to Vir-

ginia the desirability of marriage from every point of view. She had, also with apparent innocence, caused other Southern girls of long ancestry and short purses to defile before him, without provoking in the young lord of the manor the faintest show of interest. She had vainly wondered why he couldn't stir himself to find a wife "up Nawth." Lyndsay had proved impracticable, and Mrs. Beaton had perforce to be resigned.

Mona now regretfully believed that he, too, had long since acquiesced in the necessity of considering her only as his grateful beneficiary and friend.

She had never suspected the fact that Lyndsay, unwavering from her since the beginning, had credited her with giving up Lancelot probably because of a confession of his feelings for Cecil Dare. He had pitied Mona profoundly, not venturing to allude to Lance again, and, like most other people, thought Mona was only waiting till her cousin had done with roaming and soldiering and would come home to marry her and "settle down."

Between Lyndsay and Cecil had sprung up a friendship, dating from the time of their return together from Fort Delaware. On the deck of a Government propeller—aboard which their kind friend, the commandant, had despatched the little party of contraband visitors back to the nearest station of the railway—Cecil had taken heart of grace and told him the true story of her previous relations with Lancelot Carlyle. As honest as the day, she could not brook the suspicion in Donald's eyes, his evident discomfort in her society following her private interview with the prisoner.

And Lyndsay had responded to this confidence with a respectful sympathy that never wavered. Whatever he thought he did not assume to read between the lines of her narrative. He continued, from first to last, to speak always of Lancelot to her as of Mona Carlyle's betrothed. But he had not failed to suspect the deeper feeling that had grown out of Cecil's long ministry to Lance's interests. And he had

greatly feared that Lance shared this feeling, and would hold to his plight with Mona through honor only.

The break between Lance and Mona had but served to fix this conviction in Lyndsay's heart. Through a correspondence with Cecil, later on, resulting from his discovery of the value of her property in Chicago, he had ascertained that she was still Madame de Chercroix's companion, with no thought of marriage or of any change in her mode of life. He knew from Lancelot's subsequent career that those two could not have met again after Cecil had quitted the prisoner behind his bars. And so, for Mona's dear sake, he had continually hoped that Lance might one day return to his first allegiance.

But here, within a day or two, had come from Lance an announcement that took the ground from beneath Lyndsay's feet, and from a staid, self-contained man of affairs had converted him into an eager lover speeding in seven-league boots to woo and win his fair.

It was never Lyndsay's way to lose time in dalliance when a purpose was to be carried out. He was pale and desperately in earnest. Whatever was to be his fate, he courted the knowledge of it now. He fancied Miss Carlyle looked nervous. Mona, indeed, had seen that he intended going straight to his mark, and trembled away from him. But this was no longer the reserved and timorous suitor of former days, and, half frightened, wholly pleased, she saw also that she could not keep him back so soon as he broached his subject.

"You have heard the news of your Cousin Lancelot and Miss Dare?" he asked eagerly, dreading what she would answer in his sick fear that she had been trying to hide pain.

"This very morning," she answered, her eyes clear as summer skies. "It is the most surprising, the most interesting, the most extraordinary—what would Madame de Sévigné have said?—certainly the most unexpected piece of news that ever came to me! But you,

who have seen Miss Dare, must tell me every little thing about my cousin that is to be. By the same mail came letters from Mr. and Mrs. Claxton, who have taken her with them to stay until Lance can get back again from Egypt for the marriage, which is to be in Paris very soon. Dick Claxton says she is the ideal soldier's bride, a perfect complement to Lance in looks and everything. I knew, of course, all about her splendid service to Lance in prison and her visit there with you and Madame de Chercroix—but, why, Mr. Lyndsay——"

Mona brought her comments to a sudden halt. For Lyndsay, who had come there prepared to conduct his affair at a moderate rate of progress, was seized in the grip of a great rapture. Taking but one stride from his fiddle-back chair to hers, without premonition he seized her two hands in a crushing grasp.

And this is what he said—the cold and reserved denizen of a Northern clime, who had never before approached her save with far-away hints and Delphic sentences, expressive of a feeling discreetly within bounds—he whom she believed to be so well cured of the old fancy for her that she had ceased allowing herself to think of the blessedness of change——!

"You can say this—you can think this? Then, heart of my heart, is not there hope for me? I, who from the first moment walked like a spaniel at your heels, have been dying of love for you! I, who have waited—oh, how I've waited—and suffered—oh, how I've suffered—just because I thought you were expecting *him* to come back again some day! I knew, of course, that war business was as big as a house between us at the first. But it's better now your people are seeing things differently. I've made friends with them; they trust me. And even if they didn't, and you could care for me, what difference would anything—ought anything—to make between two people who have given each other honest love? It's false, it's cruel to let a dead issue stand in the way of

a live love—such a love as you never dreamed of, if you'll only let it have its way. I don't ask you to speak now, if you don't feel like it. Say not a single word, but just let me try—for God's sake, let me try!"

He stopped with a great, choking sob and sank upon his chair. He spoke truth. Mona had never seen anything like this.

She sat trembling, uncertain, overcome with her fears and sweet emotions. It cost her proud, reticent nature a thousand pangs to go out of herself so far as to tell him the whole truth. But if ever a man deserved it at a woman's hands, this faithful lover did. She moved slowly, shyly toward him, and Lyndsay, wondering if heaven were opening, took her into his arms.



A SUMMER'S NIGHT

THE moonlight is a keen, white sword of pain,
That pierces through the armor of my mind.
The gentle winds are treacherously kind;
I dare not hear the nightingale's refrain.

Is the soul sickness ages old or new?
The world is summed for me in this night's stress,
Summed in a yearning, savage tenderness—
Summed in a thousand bitter thoughts of you!

ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.



AND WASN'T A FOOTBALL PLAYER

GERALDINE—What do you think of pa?

GERALD—I think he kicks pretty well, considering that he did not have the advantages of a college education.



HE WAS TO BE FEARED

HAROLD—That girl is afraid of her shadow.

HARRIET—Are you shadowing her?

THE BUTTERFLY OF DREAMS

By Richard Le Gallienne

IT was said that a tragic disappointment accounted for young Lord Laleham's curious passion for butterflies. Actually there was no such explanation, or, of course, any need of it; but pursuits out of the common naturally demand uncommon excuses—for the common mind—and it was evident to the watchful critics of Lord Laleham's career that nothing short of a great sorrow could have driven him to so trivial a means of alleviation. According to others, this dainty passion—which might well have subjected him to the contempt of his fellows, had he not been able to give a somewhat formidable physical account of himself—was to be put down as due to one of those strains of freakishness liable to break out in old families. No one, of course, dreamed that Laleham could care for butterfly-hunting for its own sake, except those entomologists for whom his collection was famous throughout the world, authoritative, classical; for Lord Laleham was one of the handsomest and richest of young English peers, and as difficult for match-making mothers to catch as one of his own butterflies—surely the last man in the world to seek the humble laurel of the lepidopterist.

And, indeed, it was true that butterflies were something more to Laleham than entomology. They were rather a poetic than a scientific passion. There was a strong vein of the mystic and poetic in his nature to which in some way mysterious to himself these strange little painted things had from childhood appealed. As the smallest boy, he had proved himself a passionist of the solitudes of nature by lone

woodland trauancies and long tramps through that gipsy wilderness which England, with all its lawns and market-gardens and nurseries, has so remarkably preserved. And, from the first moment that he found himself alone, hushed and watching and listening and a little afraid, in the belt of mighty beeches that was perhaps the chief honor of his pedigree, there had seemed a spell, an enchantment, over these lonely leaves, these gnome-like shapes of mottled bole and these twisted roots that seemed to have become so through some mysterious agonies of ancient torture—though, indeed, to most folk there was nothing there but leaves and the famous Laleham covers.

He had never forgotten the day when that spell of exquisite silence and dappled sunshine—the whole woodland with its finger on its lip—had suddenly become embodied in a tiny shape of colored velvet wings, that came floating zigzag up the dingle, swift as light, airy as a perfume, soft and silent as the figured carpet in some Eastern palace. With what awe he watched it, as at length it settled near him on a sunlit weed; with what a luxury of observation his eyes noted its sumptuous unearthly markings; and what an image of wonder and exquisite mystery it there and forever left upon his mind! In a moment it was up and away upon its uncharted travel through the wood. Instinctively he ran in pursuit. But it was too late. He had lost his first butterfly.

For Laleham from that moment all the beauty of the world, and the mystery and the elusiveness of it, were symbolized in a butterfly. From that

moment it seemed to him that the success of life was—the catching of a certain butterfly.

He was now thirty years old and had caught many butterflies, caught them in every part of the world, and the adventures he had met with in the apparently insignificant chase, were they to be written, would fully justify the defense he sometimes made of what the world called his whimsical hobby.

"You must not look upon my butterflies as trivial," he would say. "The study of much smaller things has made modern science; and a butterfly may well lead you to the ends of the earth—and even lose you among the stars. You never know where it may take you. There is no hunting more full of exciting possibilities. If you dare follow a butterfly you dare go anywhere; and no quarry will lead you into stranger places, or into such beautiful, unexpected adventures."

At thirty he was still unmarried. Life was still for him a lonely woodland, through which he chased the one butterfly he had never been able to capture. The butterflies of the world were in his marvelously arranged cabinets—rainbow upon rainbow of classified wings—but one butterfly was not there. The butterfly, indeed, might possibly have been had by exchange with other collectors, though it was one so rare and so beyond equivalent in any form that the man who had been fortunate enough to come into possession of it seldom cared to part with it.

Besides, though occasionally Laleham had resorted to this means of supplying a missing species, it was a course he seldom took. Nearly every butterfly in his vast flower garden of shimmering wings had been caught by his own hand. There was no country in the world he had not visited in his determined dream of being, one might say, the Balzac of the butterfly; and it was only the commoner sort of butterfly he had occasionally obtained by exchange. The butterfly that was missing from his collection he made it

a point of honor, and indeed, in course of time, a sort of superstition, to capture for himself.

To the ordinary entomological observer, untouched by Laleham's mystic passion, there would seem little enough to account for his preoccupation in the quite insignificant object of it, a tiny blue butterfly, to ordinary eyes not differing from any other tiny blue butterfly, and, in fact, only to be known for what it was by a mystic marking almost imperceptible, hidden beneath its wings. Not even the collector himself could be sure of what he was pursuing, on account of the butterfly's resemblance to another species comparatively common, exactly alike, except for that hidden signature, that distinguishing hall-mark.

If one were to depreciate the value of this illustrious insect and say that its sole distinction was that of rarity, the collector would only smile, and could afford to, perhaps. Rarity! only rarity! Was not that enough? Had not mankind agreed, throughout recorded history, that rarity alone, unaccompanied by any other precious characteristic, is of all qualifications the qualification of immortality; and is not rarity of all values the ideal value, a value not measurable by the eye or any method of external judgment, a value of the soul? Besides, what are the highest prizes in any chase or contest whatsoever?—a simple wreath of laurel, the antlers of a deer, objects in themselves only symbolically valuable. Why, therefore, should not the ambitious pursuing spirit of man stake its fortunes on a butterfly—for what could be more typical of its own wandering course and ever changing goal?

The Laleham butterfly, as it is now called, and as not seldom happens with other rare things in nature—this being, I may add, not the least of nature's mysterious whims—had never been found except in one remote corner of England, a fenny country producing a hardly less rare variety of flowering rush on which its caterpillar

alone could feed. It was a country of boundless marshy levels and peaty solitudes, a country of herons and long, dark-eyed pools, which, flashing every few yards under the boundless sky, filled the loneliness with magic mirrors.

For the gay it was a dreary land, but for those who have found "naught so sweet as melancholy" it was melancholy only as great music is melancholy, and its loneliness was that of some splendid raven-haired widow with her tragic gaze upon the sky. It was a thinly populated region, with here and there an inn and a few cottages taking shelter under the wing of some moldering grange. It was, in short, one of the sad, beautiful ends of the earth.

Here it was, and here alone, that Laleham's butterfly had chosen to dwell, to secrete itself, indeed, as though in a place so remote it might hope to preserve its fragile aristocratic race from extinction. Yet, though it was known to inhabit this solitude, not a dozen living people had ever seen it, and only two had caught it for many years; for there again it illustrated another mystery of nature, the persistent survival of a rare type, in such unchangeably small numbers as almost to risk extinction, as it were, for the purpose of aristocracy. For at least two hundred years, as long as it had been known at all, the Laleham butterfly had existed apparently in the same small family, only propagating itself sufficiently to keep its race and name upon the earth, and no more. It had not become rare by process of extinction, but because nature apparently had made few of it from the beginning.

Happily this aristocratic law of nature is not only applied to butterflies. In fact, one might justly say the same of the family that had dwelt in an old embattled house which had stood here, sinking deeper and deeper into the solitude, since the days of Richard II. Noctorum the house was called, as was the cluster of cottages around it—a name appropriately dark and myste-

rious, like the cry of owls at night across the fen.

In this old house of Noctorum, which had been built by his ancestors and inhabited by Fantons ever since, lived studious old Sir Gilbert Fanton, Baronet, alone most of the year round with his gout and his books, and one beautiful daughter, hardly yet a woman. A young wife, dead now many years, had left him with two sons, both soldiers, and therefore seldom at home, and one great-eyed little girl, who, far from finding the solitude of her life irksome, had taken kindly to it, and had more and more, year by year, seemed to embody the solemn beauty of her melancholy surroundings. Laleham had been a friend of young Christopher Fanton's at Oxford, and had, several years before, come down to Noctorum with the young soldier in quest of the butterfly which was the legendary glory of the district.

Though Sir Gilbert was a much older man than himself, he had found in him a scholar with similar mystic tendencies to his own, and, when the sons had gone to the wars, Laleham continued to come down to visit the father and incidentally to pursue the quest of his butterfly. Then he had taken a trip about the world, visiting the tropical haunts of his hobby, which had lasted so long that when again he returned to England it had been three years since he had visited his old friend. Besides, he had once more returned from his pilgrimage without that mystic butterfly, which continued still to evade his persevering pursuit. In every part of the world he had sought it, but still, so far as he could hear, the one place in which it might be found was the marshes of Noctorum. So, thinking less of his quest than of his friend, he determined to run down and see what progress Sir Gilbert was making with his great book on the folk-lore of the fens—for fairies and hobgoblins were Sir Gilbert's particular substitute for idleness. He found Sir Gilbert boyishly happy over his recent discovery of an indigenous and heretofore unre-

corded variant of the story of Cupid and Psyche.

"Think of it!" exclaimed the old scholar, "here in this land of clods and pitchforks, uncouth in form, indeed, but still the old dainty fancy, the old Greek fairy tale in homespun. Isn't it strange how these frail shapes of story, frail as moonbeams, are still hardy enough to make their way from land to land and take on the disguises of the peoples, rough or gentle, among which, like a thistledown, they happen to settle?"

"Yes!" answered Laleham, smiling; "they are like the butterflies of the imagination—frail but indestructible."

Sir Gilbert laughed at this reminder that there were other hobbies than his own.

"Forgive me," he said, "I am afraid I am selfishly riding my own hobby, and in my Psyche forgetting yours. Tell me about your Psyche."

Laleham shook his head and proceeded to tell of his varying fortune in foreign lands, and how he had come back with all the butterflies of the world, except the one butterfly. Sir Gilbert gave him the sympathy of a fellow-collector.

"But surely," he said, "you haven't given up the chase—at your age?"

"Almost," answered Laleham. "I am too old. The wildest enthusiasm—for butterflies—can hardly outlive thirty. I think I shall take up some serious study—like yours."

Both the friends laughed, and Sir Gilbert said:

"But seriously, I have heard of your butterfly having been seen within a mile or two from here no longer than a week ago. There were two fellows staying at the inn last month who called to see me, enthusiasts like yourself, and they were positive that they had seen it over by the Black Ditches—of course you know the place. But they missed it, all the same."

"The worst of the beast is," said Laleham, "that you cannot be sure, so to say, that it is itself till you have it in your hand. The other brute is so like it."

"Yet you were once sure enough, dear friend," answered Sir Gilbert.

"True," said Laleham sadly, "but who knows, I may have been wrong."

"Anyhow, here you are," said Sir Gilbert, "in the best season of the year. You never had a better opportunity. If you don't catch your butterfly this time you never will. This is your home, you know, and you know, too, that I shall treat you with no ceremony. You can go about your butterflies, and I shall go about my fairies, and if I seem to neglect you Mariana will make up for me."

Mariana entered at that moment and stood by her father. When Laleham had last seen her hers were still those reluctant feet of maidenhood of which the great poet has sung. Now she was a woman; a very young woman, it is true, but a woman. That grave beauty of the melancholy fens, of which I have spoken as having "passed into her face," was there now in a still more decided presence. Her hair was black as English hair seldom is, her skin was an exquisite olive, and her eyes were like those strange pools which flashed darkly in the evening light outside the library window. Her black eyelashes were so thick that you could not help thinking of them as rushes guarding the secrecies of the strange mirrors inside. And not externally only did she seem the very embodiment of her surroundings, but her spirit seemed also to have absorbed their passionate silence.

Perhaps no landscape says so little and is yet so richly eloquent as the elegiac landscape of a fen country. How beyond all speech is its silence, how beyond the shallow, spectacular changes of showier natural effects is its solemn art of imperturbability! Mariana was strangely silent—but, indeed, not speechless. The lesson of the nature about her seemed to have entered into her whole being, the lesson that such silence must only be broken by very significant, very beautiful words—as though silence were an exquisite, unsullied sky, only now and again to be interrupted by stars.

Laleham had observed her but little on his former visits, for, as I have said, she was hardly more than a child; and, besides, was it the cloud of his butterfly or was it some other unforgotten face that veiled for him the faces of women, so that all these years he had passed unscathed through all the battalions of beautiful faces?

Be that as it may, it was on the occasion of this visit that he saw the beauty of Mariana Fanton for the first time, and, as the days went by, he found that beauty making an even stronger appeal to his imagination, which, as always is the case with such natures as his, lay very near to his heart:

As Sir Gilbert had "threatened," it was on Mariana that he had to rely for companionship on those days when he was not out alone with his net across the fens; for Sir Gilbert was so hard at work upon a paper for the Folk-Lore Society on his recent discovery that he could only spare his evenings for his friend.

As Laleham's visit lengthened into weeks the days he spent alone grew less, and the days he spent with Mariana grew more, and the butterfly remained uncaught. Sometimes Mariana would go hunting it with him, but oftener they would go out on long, aimless walks together, saying little but always coming nearer and nearer through that language of expressive silence which both had been born to speak and understand. When Mariana did speak, what a heavenly animation swept its sunlight over her face! But her silence, as someone has said of her, was like a sky full of stars.

Laleham's stay at Noctorum was nearing its end. So far as his old friend was concerned, he could, of course, have stayed there forever.

"If I were you," said Sir Gilbert, "I would not leave this place till I had caught it."

"The continued presence of such a determined huntsman might frighten it from the district altogether," answered Laleham. "I will use strata-gem—let it rest in security a while, and come again."

It was the hour after dinner when the two usually smoked their pipes together, and Sir Gilbert was genuinely sorry to lose his friend, but the proofs of his pamphlet on Cupid and Psyche had just arrived by the evening post, and his fingers were itching to open them. Besides, Laleham was to be with them yet a day or two longer. Presently Sir Gilbert's proofs became irresistible, and turning to his friend he said:

"Do you mind, old man, but I am just dying to look at these silly proofs of mine—pride of authorship, you know. Suppose you look up Mariana—she is out there, I see, on the veranda—and talk astronomy to her for a few minutes. Then we can have a talk."

"With all my heart," said Laleham, laughing as he opened the door onto the star-lit veranda, and left the old man to himself.

As Laleham took a chair by Mariana's side, her recognition of his presence would have been imperceptible to anyone who did not understand her language of silence. Her eyes remained fixed on the stars, and he sat down near her without attempting even to join her reverie. He was well content to look at her and know that she was near. Presently, without turning her head, with her eyes still among the stars, she said in her curious, deep, sudden voice:

"You have not found your butterfly?"

"No."

"Do you still hope to find it?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen it?"

"Yes."

"How often?"

"Twice."

"Twice!" she exclaimed, at length turning and looking at him. "Twice! and you lost it both times?"

Before he could answer she raised her hand to the stars. "Look!" she said. "I sometimes think that the soul is like a butterfly, and that it goes from star to star, as a butterfly goes from flower to flower—" Then, with another of her sudden, and often dis-

concerting, transitions, she turned again to Laleham.

"Will you tell me about those times you saw your butterfly?" she said.

"It is an odd story," Laleham began, "and I am afraid you may think me superstitious. But you mustn't think that it accounts for my butterflies, for I have loved them, for some unexplained reason, since I was a boy."

"Perhaps," he added, "some tastes are prophetic." And then he went on: "The first time I saw it was one morning about eight years ago. I was hunting it among similar country to this, and suddenly it rose out of a bed of reeds. It was so near me that I made sure it was mine, so sure that I was in no haste to strike with my net, but watched it and studied it a while, was quite carelessly certain of it, in fact—and then, just as I held my net ready to capture it, away it went on the wind not quite out of sight, but always keeping a coquettish distance, near enough to lure me on, far enough away to escape."

"It rather served you right for being so sure, didn't it?" said Mariana.

"You see, I was only a young butterfly hunter then," said Laleham. "I have learned wisdom since."

"Go on," prompted Mariana.

"Well, it led me on in this way for quite two hours, till we came to the end of the wild country, and suddenly dropped down into a small village. You will laugh at what follows, though it had its sad side for me. We had come on the village at the end where stands the parish church."

"I know the village," said Mariana absently, as if she were saying nothing. Laleham shot a troubled look at her, but continued:

"The churchyard was filled with a throng of people gaily dressed as for a wedding. What should my butterfly do but dash among them, and I after it, for it was too precious to lose. Soaring over the heads of the crowd, it dashed for shelter into the church, and I again after it, forgetting all but my butterfly—and there were two young people kneeling at the altar.

My abrupt entrance naturally made a sensation which brought me to myself, and dropping on my knees in a pew, I watched my butterfly flicker up the aisle till it settled itself on the clasped hands of the kneeling bride. In surprise, she turned her head, and——"

"Well?"

"I saw her face."

"And the butterfly?"

"Escaped by the belfry."

"Quite a fairy tale," said Mariana, after a pause. "Now tell me about the second time you saw your butterfly."

"I hardly care to speak of it, Mariana—unless you care very much to hear."

"Would you rather not speak of it?"

"I would speak of it to no one but you."

"Do you wish to speak?"

"I do. Do you wish me to speak?"

"Yes, speak of it—to me," said Mariana gently.

"It is a very short story, Mariana—almost the same, excepting the end; for three years afterward, once more my butterfly rose out of the reeds in almost exactly the same spot, and once more it coquetted with me for miles, and once more it dashed into that little churchyard—but this time it did not vanish into the church, but went from grave to grave, as you say the soul perhaps wanders from star to star, and presently it stopped at one of the graves. I thought that now it was surely mine, and raised my net to strike, but, as I did so, I read a name upon a stone——"

In the darkness Mariana reached out her hand and took Laleham's, and, after a silence, she said:

"I know the grave," and, after another silence, she said:

"I have heard she was very beautiful."

Then the two sat on saying no more in the starlight, and all the while, though neither knew of it till they returned to the library lamps, a little blue butterfly had been hiding in Mariana's hair.

CARITA

By Hilton R. Greer

DO you ever dream, Carita, of a twilight long ago,
When the stars rained silver splendor from the skies of Mexico?

When the moonbeams on the plaza traced a shimmering brocade,
And the fountain's tinkling tumult seemed a rippling serenade?

When the velvet-petaled pansies, lifting light lips in the gloom,
Breathed their yearning for the night winds in a passion of perfume?

When in soft cascades of cadence from a garden dim and far,
Came the mournful mellow music of a murmurous guitar?

Years have flown since then, Carita, fleet as orchard-blooms in May;
But the hour that fills my dreaming—was it only yesterday?—

Stood we two a space in silence while the southern sun slipped down,
And the gray dove, Dusk, with brooding pinions wrapt the little town.

Then you raised your tender glances, darkly, dreamily, to mine,
And my pulses clashed like cymbals in a rhapsody divine;

And the pent-up fires of longing burst their prison's weak control,
And in wild, hot words came leaping madly from my burning soul;

Wild, hot words that told of passion, hitherto but half expressed;
And I caught you close, Carita, clasped you, strained you to my breast,

While the twilight-purpled heavens reeled around us where we stood,
And a tide of bliss swept surging through the currents of our blood!

And I spent my soul in kisses, crushed upon your scarlet mouth!
O Carita, señorita, dusk-eyed daughter of the South!

It was well that fate should part us; it was well my path should lead
Back to slopes of high endeavor—nay, and was it well, indeed?

You were of a tropic people, steeped in roses and romance,
Lovers of the gay fiesta, music, and the mazy dance!

I was from a northern country, scion of that colder race
Who have missed the most of living in their foolish phantom chase!

You have wed some swarthy Southron; learned long since his every whim,
Rolled *cigarros*, poured the *mescal*, sung the southern songs for him.

I have fought my fight and triumphed; all the world repeats my name;
Yet I prize one hour of loving more than fifty years of fame!

It was but a summer madness that possessed me, men will hold;
And the mellow moon bewitched me with its wizardry of gold.

As they will! But oft, when wearied of the world, I close my eyes,
And in dreams drift back where stars rain silver splendor from the skies,

And I clasp you close, Carita, while each throbbing pulse is thrilled
With a low and mournful cadence that shall nevermore be stilled!



THEY DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY NOW

GRANDMAMA—When your grandpapa was courting me he always kissed me
upon the brow.

GRANDDAUGHTER—If a man kissed me upon the brow I'd just call him
down a little bit.



GOODNESS BRINGS ITS OWN REWARD

THEO LOGGE—My mission is with the sinner; the good I leave to themselves.
MISS WEERIEGH—Ah, it pays to be good!



EXTREMELY SIMPLE

JACK BACHELOR—Is your baby intelligent?

NED NEWLYWED—Well, if he didn't know any more than to ask such a
question as that about a man's first baby, I'd drown him!



“WHEN a girl has power to make a man suffer he is in love with her.”
“Yes; and when she wants to she's in love with him.”

A MATTER OF HATS

A WARE RIVER CLUB TALE

By Henry Sydnor Harrison

NOW, half of all the trouble grew out of the weakness of little Trainor, the high-school wonder, aged seventeen years; and half of it sprang from the wonderful little postal system that has grown up in the club, none may say how; and half of it—to make a bull for once—can be traced to the absent-mindedness of Farnham, the handsome young doctor, whom many said that Miss Croxton would ultimately marry. And that leaves very little of the fault to lay upon the shoulders of Mr. Richard Barringer, upon whom, as his luck went, the burden fell most heavily.

Though Barringer had known Mary Croxton pretty much ever since he had known anything, it was not until he was twenty-five, or thereabouts, that he woke one day to the fact that there was no other girl in the wide world for him. And this is the kind of love, we read, that cries no quarter and strikes to kill; and, certainly, it being no simple thing to love Miss Croxton, from that day it went hard with him. A very persevering chap was Mr. Barringer, however, bat-blind to discouragement and with a deep-rooted yearning for taking his own where he found it; and finally the thing became almost a bore.

"Why *should* I marry you, Dick?" said Mary resignedly one day. "Of course I like you very well, and all that; but what have you ever done that would make a girl want to marry you?"

"Done!" exclaimed the amazed Mr. Barringer.

"Anybody," explained Mary, "can

be nice who is willing to take the trouble. Attractiveness is just dead common. But when it comes to marrying, girls like to take people who distinguish themselves—who can do things. And what you've ever done besides puff around in that tooty automobile and throw away a lot of your father's money, I wish you'd tell me."

"Done!" echoed Mr. Barringer once more. Then, perceiving the taunt, he added: "It's only that I've nobody to take an interest in me, and talk to me seriously about my life and my character, and—that."

Now, that was the year when there had been a big revival in tennis at the club, so that everybody was daft about it; which, no doubt, put the idea into Mr. Barringer's mind. So the upshot of the above colloquy, to come at once to the point, was that he engaged to win the club championship at the approaching tournament, or look closely into the reasons why.

Miss Croxton glanced at him approvingly. "Now, that shows the proper spirit, Dick; even tennis, if you did it magnificently, would be something. And if you do win——"

"Yes?" suggested Dick insinuatingly. "If I do win——?"

"Why, if you win," replied Mary, a little surprised, "of course you'll be the champion of the club."

"What I meant, of course," said Dick, after a moment, "was, would you like me any better if I won?"

"How can I tell, Dick? You are always asking me questions like that."

Dick privately thought tennis rather

a foolish game for an able-bodied man who could put in his time at something else. Since Mary wished him to be a luminary of the courts, however, he quietly went and bought an expensive new racket. He understood fully that to girls certain things about people were counted as an index to their leading characteristics; and though he couldn't quite grasp the sequence, he earnestly hoped that to Mary the ability to shine at tennis typified an aptitude for shining upon the domestic hearth.

Fortunately, Dick took to games of the outdoor variety in much the same way that a duck is reported to cotton to *aqua pura*. In two weeks he suddenly jumped up from no ranking at all to a top-notch of the first water. Not much to the surprise of those who had watched him at practice, he worked his way easily through the tournament, picking off an adversary daily, until at last there was nobody else left but little Willy Trainor, the infant prodigy, who had won the other division. Then Barringer, feeling that it was now time to hear a few words of praise, called up Miss Croxton on the telephone.

"Come out in my car this afternoon," proffered he, "and see me pinch it."

But Miss Croxton, it developed, was going to drive Marie Eversley out in the victoria; and, worse yet, directly after the game she was going to rush off to the Eversleys' country place for over Sunday, and might not even stay till the game was over.

Dick heard this intelligence with dismay. He had counted on a ripping interview on the spot, when, in the full flush of victory and in the capacity of a man who could do things if he cared to exert himself, he would press his distinction upon her favorable attention.

"But—I wanted to see you," protested Mr. Barringer. "Why don't you go to the Eversleys' another time? I've been laboring for two weeks like a cart-horse just to please you, and now that it's about over I want to see you, and—and discuss the outlook, you know."

Mary caught the real disappoint-

ment in his tone, and felt a little reproached. "Well, then," said she presently, "I'll leave you a note, Dick!"

"A note!" sniffed Dick. Then, on second thoughts, "Where'll you leave it?"

"Why, I'll put it in your hat-band. Leave your hat on the table, and if we have to go before it's over, I'll write just a line to—to congratulate you. Really, I'm awfully sorry not to see you, Dick— *What?* Good-bye, Dick. I do hope you'll win. Marie is calling down something, and I must run away."

And there in a nutshell is our own little original and copyrighted postal service in the Ware River Club. Upon the genesis of this domestic free delivery, the manner and circumstances of its birth, even the charter members are able to shed no light; but unquestionably it has come to stay. There is no doubt about the convenience of it, when a man you want to speak to is half a mile away at the other end of the links, and you can't wait till he fozzles along in. You are grateful for our post-office then. You write a note and stick it away in his hat-band. This is so well understood now that many of the members always make it a point to leave their hats in the most obvious spots possible, and on departing to look eagerly in for possible *billets-doux*.

So Dick left his hat hopefully upon the reading-room table, never doubting that, after walloping young Trainor in the most approved fashion, he would come back and read there how the now admiring Mary, in a girl's strange way, had ceased to harden her heart against him. When the game was over, however, and he came off the courts a beaten man, of course this point of view required a little reconstruction. Yet, had Mary then known the inner history of that match, she might have found in it, after all, something which she could admire; for Mr. Barringer, when he might have won, tossed his eagerly sought victory away, because Willy Trainor broke down and whimpered.

It happened in the dressing-room, when the match stood at two all, and little Trainor's endurance was plainly worn to a frazzle. Barringer, stretched on a wooden bench and engaged in pleasantly recuperating for the final set, was allowing two friends to fan him with a towel. Then, from behind a row of lockers, a voice trickled out to them, thin and high and a little tremulous, and recognizably Trainor's; and this, in substance, is what it said:

"He's got me now. I'm all tried out. I only needed a stroke three times. And I wanted to win so! All my people came up from the country. And father said he'd get me a horse if I won. I had him all picked out and everything. But I'm too tired." There was something just here that sounded, at the distance, not dissimilar to a sob.

Disappointments cut deep at seventeen. Mr. Barringer cleared his throat uncomfortably. "Poor little chap!" said he.

"Poor little baby!" said Barnes.

But McWilliams had caught a look in Dick's eye that he didn't like. "Dick," he began sharply, "if you do anything like that under the impression you're noble, we'll——"

"Shut up, you fellows," said Dick; and he got up a little hastily. "Let me tell you something. Gentlemen don't eavesdrop; and when they accidentally do, they act—always—just as if they hadn't heard."

So saying, he took up his racket and went out, blithely, but no longer seeking Mary's eye in the crowds that lined the court. Of course, he could no more have played to win now than he could have struck a baby in the face. Trainor was so demoralized that it was hard work giving him a point, but Dick insisted; and at the end congratulated him upon his win very handsomely. Fairly glowing with quixotism, he was able to meet unperturbed the indignant glances and honest sarcasm of those who had backed him.

In time, however, more selfish thoughts had their day again; and Mr.

Barringer became conscious of an overwhelming desire to know as soon as possible how Miss Croxton viewed the situation. The match had been a long one, and he knew that she must have flitted away some time ago to the train; but she understood what significance he had attached to the whole business, and he had a feeling that her note would contain something quite definite. Of course, technically, he was beaten, but need he give up hope? Wasn't his swift leap to the very top of the club—which anybody would admit—just the showy sort of thing that would appeal to a girl?—Mr. Barringer speeded his toilet.

The moment he entered the reading-room his eye fell upon his hat, with the narrow brim and highish crown, the solitary headgear on the table. There was only one other hat like it in the club; and, to make the matter quite plain, that one he had seen only a few minutes before on the cranium of Dr. Farnham, disappearing toward the train and a two weeks' vacation in the Adirondacks. Dick, therefore, knew his hat at a glance; he picked it up and expectantly looked into its interior.

However, there was no note. Mr. Barringer, unwilling to rely upon his first impression, spared no pains to bring it forth from a possible lurking-place. He turned the leather band inside out, he permanently disabled the silken ribbon around the crown, he came within a hair's breadth of dislocating the brim. Had it been there it could not by the remotest chance have escaped him.

Mr. Barringer looked into the hat once more and this time started. After all, it wasn't his hat. His hat, with the three gilt initials and the little spot of ink just under the R, had, of course, been carried off by some blundering fool in the crowds. Of all times when his hat had been exposed to the public eye, and it wouldn't have mattered particularly, for a bungler to select this one! Mr. Barringer again started, this time

more violently. As in a flash it suddenly came to him that it was Farnham's hat, the only one like his in the club, that he now held in his hand. His own hat, particularly dear to him at that moment, was even then growing rapidly more and more remote in the direction of the station. And Mary's note, designed for his eye alone and of a somewhat intimate nature, was being quietly hauled off on top of another man's head for a fortnight's stay in the woods.

Mr. Barringer, with all his faults, was a man of prompt action. It took him perhaps three seconds to calculate that, with any sort of luck in the matter of an electric car at the gate, he could make it just in time to nip Farnham at the station. Clasp ing that gentleman's now rather disheveled hat firmly upon his head, he broke down the club steps at a very swift pace, to the unfeigned amazement of numerous tea-drinkers gathered upon the porch.

II

Dick, however, had no luck with the electric cars. He panted into the station three minutes late, in the nick of time to see the smoke of the boat-train melting away on the horizon. The possession of the note had now become the chief goal of his existence. So far from turning dejectedly homeward, he instinctively perceived that it was now only a question of reaching Northport before the boat, with Farnham on it, steamed away. He shook his fist after the departing train, with a few remarks; and, turning away, inquired into the possibilities of the schedule.

There was another train an hour later which might or might not connect with the boat—the fact being contingent, it appeared, upon the whimsies of the engineer. On the chance, of course, Dick took it. This train was a local in the superlative degree—a veritable ecstasy of a local. Not only did it come to a full stop at

every cowshed and crossroad, but frequently it paused in the open country merely to ruminate upon the beauties of nature. The impatient Mr. Barringer, watch in hand, cynically regretted that he had not walked. Hope lay done to death when, in the lapse of ages, the apathetic locomotive finally dragged itself into Northport.

Happily, the wharf was right at the station, and Dick saw in one eager glance that the boat was still at her dock. At the very moment, however, deck-hands were preparing to haul in the plank; and without delaying for the process known through courtesy as slowing down, Dick swung hastily to earth.

The dashing arrival of a late-comer in the last fraction of a second was so common a sight at the wharf that Dick's first appearance created little excitement. It was his subsequent attitude that aroused first the interest and later the anger of the officer at the plank. For a young person to break his neck in the mad effort to reach an outgoing boat, and then, having reached it, merely to stand stock-still and stare, was, to say the least, a trifle surprising.

Dick, however, had no desire to go to New York if it could be avoided. There was about one chance in ten million, he figured, of locating Farnham from the dock, but that one was worth exploring. Placing a restraining hand upon the gang-rail, and a restraining foot upon the gangplank, he turned his gaze toward the upper deck.

The very first thing that his eye fell upon was the familiar form of Dr. Farnham. That good-looking young physician was leaning over the rail, regarding Mr. Barringer with no little curiosity.

"All aboard, sir," said the officer impatiently.

"Coming to New York?" called down Farnham.

"I hope not. I say, you've run away with my hat."

Farnham stared. Dick now no-

ticed that the doctor's head sported a gray golf cap of nondescript design, and a swift fear smote him. Farnham removed the cap and examined it critically. "No," he announced, "it's mine, all right."

"You really must come aboard, sir, if you're coming. We're late now."

"Just a moment, officer. Not that thing—my straw hat. You wore it off from the club."

"Oh, did I? Well, it's too late to do anything now. Sorry you troubled to come down to tell me. Take good care of mine, will you? It's new, you know."

This asininity, and the obvious and growing interest of the passengers, irritated Mr. Barringer profoundly; he longed to call up something profane. "You pitch my hat down here, right away," he ordered savagely. "I need it for a special purpose."

Farnham thought Dick was demented. However, he disappeared from the rail, and the entire side of the boat tittered. All, that is, except the ship's officer, on whose forehead the veins swelled. "Now, sir," he said severely, "are you coming aboard, or are you going to stand there and pass the time of day?"

Dick realized that in a couple of minutes now it would all be over. He eyed the officer seductively. "Officer," said he, still with one foot on the dock and one on the plank, "this is really quite a—a delicate matter. My friend has inadvertently carried off some of my belongings—of my important belongings. If you will have the kindness to——"

"Not another second. Haul her in!"

"One minute. A plain business proposition! Wait five minutes at five dollars per m——"

"*Haul her in, men!*" And this time Dick felt the gangway slide forward under his feet. Plainly, it was now a simple question of going or staying. To abandon the note at this stage of the game was of course not to be thought of. Casting one last fruitless glance toward the upper deck, Mr. Barringer accepted the inevitable,

and stepped quietly on to the boat. Almost immediately a bell jangled somewhere, water churned and the good ship sidled slowly from the wharf.

Dick's feelings toward Farnham at the moment were not kindly. Still, he reflected as philosophically as he might that he could not see Mary until Monday, anyway, and the sea voyage would afford him ample time for meditation. If Mary's note was worth anything at all it was certainly worth a little trip to New York, and not for a moment did he regret that he had come. So, the cynosure of many curious and amused eyes, he pushed intently through the crowd in search of Farnham.

Farnham, claspings Dick's hat in both his hands, now approached the rail, and scrutinized, with his rather short-sighted eyes, the mob of handkerchief wavers on the wharf, still only a few yards away. At first he wondered in astonishment whether the strangely acting Barringer could have been pushed off and drowned, but almost immediately he caught sight of him—there he was, standing somewhat back in the crowd, and staring hard right at him, Farnham—yes, there could be no doubt of it. A little shorter than his recollection of Barringer, a little stockier, a little redder in the face; but of course, there could be no question about the identity. Mindful of Dick's positive orders to throw his headgear down without delay, and noting that the distance between them was slowly growing greater, he saw that the exigencies called for instant action. Grasping the now celebrated hat by the brim, he made a swift Swedish movement upward, and filliped it dexterously in the direction of the wharf. To his great elation, after circling largely, it fell by a miracle upon the edge of the dock and was promptly corraled by the nearest bystander.

Farnham's joy, however, was born to sudden death. In the very instant of his triumph he heard a shout from behind in familiar tones which turned him fairly sick; and wheeling quickly,

looked into the eye of Mr. Barringer, who was standing motionless, petrified with indignation, one foot arrested on the top step. Across the stretch of white deck the two men regarded each other.

"Ass!" cried Dick. "To throw it when you might have seen I wasn't on the wharf."

There was a roar of laughter from the delighted onlookers, and Dick gnashed his teeth. After all, to have lost it a second time through the incredible stupidity of Farnham! He would have gladly fallen upon the thick-witted doctor and lowered him to a quiet death over the side, but the matter being now definitely settled he did not care to contribute further to the public enjoyment of the trip. Not trusting himself to further comment, he turned angrily away.

In regard to his hat—the boat by this time was steaming up fast—Dick's pitiful best now was to call out his name and address to the youth who had picked it up, with the request that it be forwarded by express, collect.

Later, in his own stateroom, the humor of this ending to his quest struck him forcibly, and he laughed aloud. By and bye, if all went well, he and the note he had been at such pains to recover would be traveling as swiftly as possible in precisely opposite directions. Since the world began there was never anything more farcical.

In time the smile wore off, and Mr. Barringer stared blankly at his closed window-shutter, thinking bitterly of the needlessness of it all. It was in the midst of these depressing reflections that an idea suddenly came to him, like a bright shaft of hope. Might not there be a bare chance that Farnham, his curiosity fired, had discovered the note sticking in his hat, and treacherously removed it?

Dick sprang up and opened the door very cautiously, lest his appearance might be the signal for a general rally. Applying his eye to the crevice thus created, he instantly caught sight

of Farnham, who was standing forward, gazing about him in evident perplexity. At Dick's whistle he walked rapidly up.

"I don't like to go out just now," explained Mr. Barringer, with a faint smile, "for fear of exciting enthusiasm."

Farnham flung himself into the solitary chair in the cubby-hole. "Well, of all the screaming farces, in three screams and a hoot," he began considerately, "this seems to me about the screamiest ever."

Dick, who wanted to know the worst at once, decided that it was no time for reproaches. He lit a cigarette and thoughtfully dropped the match upon the floor.

"Farnham," said he quietly, though his heart beat high, "in that hat of mine that you were kind enough to run off with, did you—ah—happen to see anything in the way of a paper—a writing?"

The doctor laughed. "So that's the rub, is it? Well, relieve yourself. It's in my pocket now."

Dick's eye gleamed. "Surely you haven't read it?"

Farnham did not mind Dick's offensive tone at all. "No time as yet," he answered pleasantly. "You see, I didn't know a thing about it till you yelled up from the wharf. Of course, I thought you were piflicated. Later, I happened to catch a glimpse of Miss Croxton's handwriting sticking out of the hat-band. Well, our hats are so much alike, you know, that I concluded she had simply made a little mistake. So I took out the note, as mine, and flung you the hat, as yours, and by request. Unfortunately, I mistook that fat fellow in the brown derby for you. Since then I've been dashing around everywhere after you, and haven't had a minute to myself."

Dick thought Farnham's nerve little short of stupendous. "Well," said he shortly, "I don't see your point of view, I confess. But now that I've caught up with it, I'll thank you to hand it over."

"My dear Barringer, as I've just said, I've no reason in the world for

thinking this note was intended for you."

"Possibly the address will throw a little light on that subject."

"It isn't addressed. Really, we are square all round. The hats are no argument because a girl would be simply dead sure to get them mixed; and arguing merely from general probability—well, really, I wouldn't feel justified in handing it over to you. The only fair way that I can possibly see is to turn back one corner gradually, and see how it begins."

"She never begins them."

"Then," declared the resourceful doctor, "we shall have to stand side by side, open at the word 'Go,' and read together."

"Farnham," said Dick suddenly, "that note is mine, and you know it. If you didn't you would have read it long ago. Is it reasonable to suppose that I would have dashed off to New York without even a toothbrush if I hadn't known positively that it was going to be in my hat? The fact is, if you must know, she promised to leave it there for me. I'll tell you what. Give me the note and let me read two words. If I'm wrong I'll hand it right over to you with my best apologies, and forfeit any kind of stake you mention. Now, what do you say?"

Farnham thought it over. "Well," he said at last, "if you tell me on your word of honor as a gentleman that Miss Croxton promised to leave a note for you in your hat."

"I do," said Mr. Barringer positively.

Farnham put his hand into his outer coat-pocket and drew out a slip of faint blue paper. It was a sheet of the club notepaper, folded twice, with an extra little twist at the corner. Dick did not know how badly he had wanted it until he observed his slightly faint feeling at the moment of taking it over. He unfolded the paper slowly, and with Farnham's keen eyes following every line of his features, swept his eye over Miss Croxton's well-known handwriting. This is what Mary had written, hastily as the scrawl indicated:

Can you tell when a person is serious? Even you could hardly expect me ever to care for you now. You have surprised and disappointed me till I can't express it.

Quite numb-hearted, Dick stared at the words until they danced meaningless before his eyes—yes, he could tell when a person was serious, and he saw plainly that so far as Mary went this was the end of everything. That she could find it in her heart to reward his whole-souled devotion with a message so curt, so heartless, so absolutely cruel, was quite beyond belief. She rejected him scornfully, she kicked him away like an old slipper, and only because he didn't appear to be so good a game player as somebody else. Even at that trying moment it didn't occur to him that he could make the whole thing right in half a minute by telling her that he had done it on purpose because little Trainor cried.

The chill about Dick's heart warmed and his anger rose. After all, the matter went deeper than tennis and struck into the roots of character. Since Mary was this sort of girl he was done with her for good. He would never see her again; he would meet her on the street and cut her so dead that she would blanch for very shame. But first he would go to her and tell her calmly and with perfect dignity, yet in language that scorched, in just what light he viewed her astounding conduct. Perhaps then, when it was too late, she would at last realize what she had lost.

Mr. Barringer crumpled the bit of paper in his hand somewhat vehemently and, looking up, caught Farnham's watchful eye upon him, and immediately regretted having done so. He stepped hurriedly to the little window, flung open the shutters, and let in a breath of the dusky air.

"It was mine all right," said he quietly. "Whew! This room's like an oven." Dick stood for a minute looking out over the dancing bay. "This sea air makes me hungry," he observed presently. "Let's go down and try to scare up something to eat."

III

THE Croxtons lived in the country—a big gray house with white pillars, on the turnpike, and fifty yards from the Ware River electric cars. Mr. Croxtan said that he had bought the place because the air was fresher than you could get in town; but Mary said it was because it was near the club. Certainly you could stand on the front porch and see at a glance whether it was worth while going over, and, of course, Mary found this quite an advantage.

These were not the thoughts, however, that engrossed her attention on a certain dark Tuesday evening. Though her troubled brow indicated that it was she who had to grapple single-handed with the problems of nations, she was merely thinking that, in view of all the circumstances, Dick's continued absence was, to say the least, a little pointed. Unmindful of the frivolous conversation being bandied back and forth about her, she again reached the conclusion that Dick had ceased to care for her, if, indeed, he ever really had.

"Mother says there are no mosquitoes out here," said Ethel. "And so I'd like to ask her, before witnesses, what she would call this insect on my wrist."

"Good heavens, Ethel! That must be a vulture."

"Hush, Tom! You'll scare the shy little dear away. And mother's so anxious to see what one looks like."

"Ethel," said her father, "your mother did not say there were not any mosquitoes here. She said there were not *many*."

"But, papa, there are three on me at this very minute."

"That's three on you," suggested Tom very facetiously. "Bragging aside, I could guarantee four on a general show-down."

"You see, papa, there are seven already. And I'm perfectly certain that if Marie wasn't such polite company——"

"That is all imagination, Ethel. If there were really a swarm of mosquitoes about, it would seem very odd

that none had attacked me or——" Just here he discontinued suddenly and smote himself a ringing and unmistakable blow on the cheek.

"Eight," said Ethel pleasantly. "Who is next?"

A yellow Stanhope bowled up the broad driveway, and pulled up so sharply that the big bay horse attached to it evinced a momentary intention of seating himself upon the stone flagging at the step-bottom. A moment later Mr. Richard Barringer, hat in hand—a brand-new one—came slowly up the steps.

Dick shook hands all round with grave courtesy, and expressed the hope that all were enjoying a high degree of health. Declining the proffer of a cozier seat, he disposed himself upon the topmost step and opined that the night was dark. Mrs. Croxtan maintained the belief that but for the cloudy nature of the evening a moon would have been doing a general illuminating business along the pike. Miss Croxtan, who was now animation itself, was sure that there would be a moon later, a beautiful full moon.

After these clever sallies there is no denying that conversation languished. Dick had not in any sense mapped out his farewell interview with reference to the bosom of the happy family. It was like a signal for general relief when Mr. Croxtan, under plea of a quiet hour with "The Stones of Venice," at last withdrew his wife into the library.

"Poor papa," cried Mary conversationally, "has been nearly bitten to death by the mosquitoes, but he wouldn't say a thing about it for *anything*."

"Very disagreeable things, mosquitoes," contributed Mr. Barringer from the steps, "and very annoying."

Tom, upon whom the situation bore depressingly, now made a proposition to Miss Eversley relative to showing her something—moonflowers, it may be—around the elbow of the porch. To Mary's dismay her sister, swiftly foreseeing a dismal predicament for herself, also rose, and, coolly hooking her arm in Tom's, absolutely refused to

be shaken off; and the trio shortly vanished into the darkness.

Thus, in the whirl of an eye, Miss Croxton found herself alone on the porch with the man who had so obviously ceased to love her.

"Oh, mosquitoes!" cried Mary hastily. "Why, there have been swarms of them here tonight, perfect *swarms*. And we've all been bitten terribly. Every *one* of us. Of course, Marie was too sweet to complain—she has not said *one* thing—but I know she's been bitten simply *terribly*."

"I did not know," said Mr. Barringer a shade stiffly, "that you were so troubled by the annoying things. The—last time I was here I don't recall seeing any at all."

"Oh, that was some time ago, wasn't it?" said Mary brightly. "Probably it wasn't the season then."

"Two weeks, I believe. Since then my time has been pretty well occupied, as you may recollect. Then, I've been away for some days."

"Indeed!"

"Immediately after the game the other day I was unexpectedly called to New York on business."

"Oh!" Mary smiled. "It just occurred to me that I probably saw you start. You see, I persuaded Marie to stay over another week with me, and I'm going home with her for next Sunday instead. I—I was sitting on the club porch when you dashed by that day."

Dick's first inclination was to be angry; but then, he thought, what difference could it make now?

"You might have told me," he said presently.

"How could I, Dick? You know you run much faster than I. I'm awfully sorry——"

"You might have called out," said Mr. Barringer. "But, of course, I appreciate that my feelings are nothing to you."

"I did not know," replied Mary immediately, "that you were planning to go to New York."

"I wasn't." Suddenly he stood before her, tall, big, very grave, very

good-looking, very much a young man with a lacerated heart. "I went after this, and the boat carried me off."

Miss Croxton, in evident surprise, uncrumpled the little wrinkled blue sheet, and at once flushed hotly. "Did he—surely," she cried witheringly, "he didn't give this to *you*?"

Dick did not at all understand why she should appear to think this so contemptible of Farnham, but he did not inquire. "I practically made him," he said slowly. "I'll say for him that he didn't want to a bit. You see, he started away in a hurry, and by mistake bore off my hat with the note in it. I found this out a few minutes later, and, of course, started right off——"

"Your hat! But—I didn't put this in *your* hat!"

Dick, with a face suddenly white, could only nod.

"Oh, Dick!—why, of course, I didn't write you a note when I expected to see you right after the game. It was for him! He did something I didn't like at all, and, well—I don't want to talk about it, but I was a little flurried for fear somebody would come in, and I suppose I must have made a mistake in the hats. And you can imagine how surprised I was that day when I saw you sweep off the porch like the wind——"

Mr. Barringer turned away, and stood for a moment staring blindly out into the inky blackness. His feelings underwent such a violent revulsion that it was as though he were mortally ill. When finally he dared trust himself to speak, "I'm awfully glad, Mary," he said quite huskily.

Mary felt the quick tears start somewhere, away back, but she would have died rather than let them reach the surface. "Why, Dick, how could I have written you a note like that? What had you done——?"

"I thought," said Mr. Barringer, "that perhaps you were annoyed at my losing the match."

"Annoyed! Why, Dick, it was splendid, just splendid! I can't be-

gin to tell you how I feel about it. And if you could see his delight——"

A rosy wave originated at Mr. Barringer's collar-line and swept turbulently upward to his very blond hair. "What are you talking about, Mary? Really, let's talk of something else. I——"

"Oh, it's no use doing that way, Dick, because everybody knows about it, anyway. Mr. McWilliams told me in confidence that same afternoon, and then, in *some* way, it leaked out—as if anybody cared about an old tennis game! And we all think you were just fine to do it, and——"

"Please don't, Mary," said Dick, really pained, though his chest swelled nigh to bursting. "It was really nothing at all——"

"I thought," said Mary, "that you might care to hear we think you noble. Anyway, we do. And I would have told you before, long ago—only you never come to see me now——"

Her head lowered, and her lashes lay on her cheek a silken veil. To Dick she was so as a girl should be that not to gather her to his arms was a searing pain.

But, "Mary," he said, quite calmly, "it's no good my making resolutions about you, because as soon as I see you they all go toppling over. It isn't that I would badger you into marrying me, but—Mary, when I look at you, and think what a sweet thing life might be with you—to keep on missing it—I don't know how—seems too stupid to be right. And so, of course, as long as you don't care for anyone else, I'll only never give you up, until some day—perhaps——"

Mary raised her eyes, and, looking into them, Dick dropped his hat unconsciously and rather recklessly, considering its newness, upon the floor, and suddenly folded her hand into his.

"Do you think you could—ever, Mary?"

"Oh, Dick, I—I do now. These last three days I've——"

Miss Eversley and young Croxton, who had been just then on the point of emerging around the corner of the porch, instantaneously changed their plans, for their own doubtless good and sufficient reasons, and fled precipitately back in the direction of the hammock.



WITH A LITTLE FRENCH FLOWER

GO tell him, yellow giroflée,
I found you on an April day,
Where the white Indre pours its slow
Still silver round a gray chateau.
From an old wall you leaned to see
The moat reflect your witchery;
Ere the sweet river turned again
To wander on across Touraine.

How the bees grumbled when I took
Their flower to press it in my book!
The honey they had failed to get
Within your heart lies hidden yet,
As in my heart, unfound, unsought,
The hidden honey of my thought—
The shy words that I dare not say,
Go tell him, yellow giroflée!

GRACE WALCOTT HAZARD.

AN AFTERNOON CALL

By May Isabel Fisk

MY DEAR, I hadn't the least idea I should find you at home. It is such a lovely day I was positive you would be out. Now, Ethel, how horrid of you—you know I didn't mean—I really thought you would be out. I only hoped—oh, dear, what's the use of trying to explain? I'm always getting the horse before the cart when I've made a mistake, but you know what I mean, don't you? Of course you do.

Oh, is that your new photograph? Yes, perfectly stunning, simply lovely; just gorgeous—but it doesn't look a bit like you. Why, no, my dear, how touchy you are! I don't mean it exactly flatters you—it just doesn't look like you. That's all. I like it, though, tremendously. Yes, I had mine taken there, too. Did they? I can't remember how many proofs they took, but I know it was a great many more than that. They had one of my pictures in the window, too. Of course I insisted they had to take it right out—I told them I would sue them if they didn't, but they wouldn't. My pictures were splendid, too, only they looked precisely like me. Now, Ethel, if you say another word about that picture I am going straight home—you know perfectly well what I meant. You know I'm the last woman in the world to say anything nasty intentionally. All right, we won't say any more about it. No, I'm not a bit mad now.

Why, I think your gown is perfectly dear—and you have such a hard figure to fit. She's really cheap? Yes, perhaps. Still, I think, dear, I won't bother to take her address—I don't

believe she would do for me—you know I'm awfully particular.

Tired? Don't talk to me about being tired! I'm a wreck after that old charity bazaar. I don't show how really tired I am because I have just been having my facial treatment. Such a deserving woman, too—I am so glad to help her. She has a sick mother and a—let me see, I think it's just a plain sister to support; consequently she needs the work so badly she comes to me for half price. That's the kind of charity I thoroughly enjoy—to help those who really need it.

Well, I—I don't know, my dear, whether she would for you, but I'll speak to her about it. You see, the real reason she made the figure so low for me is because I've been so kind to her and she is very fond of me. Of course I'll ask her if you are perfectly sure you want me to. I don't want you to think for a moment that I'm not willing to—you know I would put myself out to any extent for you. Well, all right, Ethel, just as you say. You know there isn't anything in the world— Very well, have it your own way; only, remember, I offered to.

Yes, Aunt Margaret roped me into that hateful old charity bazaar—I nearly worked myself to death. No, I didn't make anything for it—I thought if I gave my time that was all I could do. Yes, a whole evening, and I never sold a thing but two photograph frames, and then I made a mistake. Someway, I don't know how, I got the price-tags mixed—you know how they will go and get all snarled. Well, I sold the two frames for fifteen

cents apiece—that was the price of the pen-wipers; the frames were a dollar and a half. You know Edna Grant painted them, and of course she had to happen along just then and ask who bought them and the price and everything—she is the most inquisitive thing I ever saw. She was hopping. I told her it didn't make any difference—it was all for charity, anyway, but she was so stubborn and couldn't seem to see it in that light, though I explained and explained. That's the way when you try to help—if anything goes wrong, why, you're always blamed for it. And I gave up a theatre-party to go there and work. At least, the party was postponed till the following week, but really in a way I did give it up just the same. My dear, mark my words, every time you put yourself out to do people favors you get yourself in hot water. That old bazaar taught me a lesson. No more charity for me.

She's left? And she thought she was right? They always do. But, my dear, you treat them too well. Yes, I know she was good-natured, but if they are they always have sticky dishes—I never knew the combination to fail. Yes, I had to get rid of Katy—she wasn't a pleasant girl at all. She had such a disagreeable habit of looking tired and sulky. I never had a moment's peace with her till she went. She said there was too much to do—she never was through till all hours. Now, isn't that just an example of those stupid, ill-natured creatures? You see, on the contrary I was always urging her to hurry—I never tried to keep her back—

Why, my dear, no such thing! She had simply nothing to do. Yes, six of us. Yes, the cooking. Yes, the cleaning. Yes, the waiting on the table. Yes, and helped take care of the baby. Oh, yes, I always make them do the mending. No, I don't think I spoil a girl. Of course, if I had anything for a second maid to do I would have one. Edward says women always talk about their servants. Well, I'm sure it's awfully hard to know what to talk about, don't you think so?

Edward has got it into his head that I don't read the papers thoroughly, and has been making the most awful fuss. My dear, never marry a man with one idea—he'll drive you nearly crazy. I read the paper every single morning straight through—at least, I read everything that's interesting—I couldn't exist unless I knew who was dead and the personal column and the department-store advertisements. The war? I suppose so, but it really bores me to death. And, my dear, have you seen the bargains in silk shirt-waists that Wickleheimer & Murray are advertising for their Friday sale? I can hardly wait to get there.

Edward is trying to teach me politics, too. Yes, I told him I thought he would have a hard time; but if you will believe me, he says I am very intelligent about it. You see, they mustn't have a Tammany President again—that is, if they ever had one, I can't seem to remember—and tariff and free trade aren't the thing at all. Of course, there is a lot more to it, but this is all you really have to know to be able to carry on a real political conversation. Edward is so fond of having me well informed, and I don't mind it nearly as much as I thought I would. Why don't you try it? Oh, your ethical-culture class? Yes—yes—I suppose it must be pleasant, but I think I will stick to politics for the present—it's so broadening.

Oh, say, right opposite me in the car sat that woman we saw the other day—you know the one with the reddish hair—What? Dyed? Oh, I don't know. Of course, my hair is red, too. I've noticed it seemed to be getting lighter lately. You know when we used the soft coal—I thought perhaps—it might have been that—sort of made it lighter. For myself, you know I simply loathe red hair. Well, anyway, don't let's talk about it. And then we got stuck in a blockade, and if you could have heard what that motorman said to the truck-driver! It was simply awful.

My dear, have you noticed how Mabel Graham is carrying on with

Archie Thorne? I think it's perfectly awful. He's there all the time, and when he isn't they are out together. It makes a girl so conspicuous—everybody is talking about it. I should think her mother would put a stop to it. And I don't think she is a bit attractive—in fact, I dislike her. And if you will believe me, Edward seems to think she is awfully pretty. Well, you know me; I'm not a bit jealous, but I hate anything of that sort. I trust Edward implicitly, but I always keep a little watch, just the same.

What was I saying about Archie? When I get stirred up about Edward I forget everything else. Oh, yes—well, he was just as devoted to me before I introduced him to her. Of course, I'd gotten through with him or I wouldn't have thought of introducing them—she's such a sly thing. But nevertheless you hate to pass a man over to someone else even if you don't intend to speak to him again. Oh, not at all. Edward loves me to receive all the attention I can from other men; he never objects—I would like to see him try!

Well, Archie and I quarreled—I'll tell you about it, and you see if you wouldn't have been raging, too. I promised to meet him at Sherry's one Saturday afternoon about five. I said if it rained or even looked like a storm I positively would not go; but I told him he had better be there just the same. Well, anyway, it did rain—it poured; but I went to the matinee and stopped on my way home, and, my dear, if you will believe me, he wasn't there at all! Suppose I did say I wouldn't be there if it rained, I told him to be there just the same. Well, I do think you argue very peculiarly, Ethel. Of course, he tried to explain afterward, and, my dear, he seemed to think it was all my fault,

so of course I wouldn't speak to him again.

Well, that's the kind of a girl Mabel Graham is! I don't see how men can stand that kind. I haven't any use for her.

You know, my dear, I think I shall go in for a career—everything bores me so, and I have so much to do with all my household cares. I really have a lot of talent for no end of things. In fact, that's the reason I've never settled down at one thing—it seemed so difficult to decide which I really wanted to do. I've sometimes thought I would like to be an actress. They never get up till ten o'clock in the morning and have late suppers and get quantities of flowers. I haven't made up my mind between that and art, so in the meantime— Good heavens, is that four o'clock? I intended to make eight more calls this afternoon. You see, I made four before I came here and was lucky enough to find everybody out. Don't be stupid, Ethel. You know you are the only one I hoped I'd find. Now, do come and see me soon. All right, any day you say next week. I haven't a thing to do. N-no, not Monday—I can't remember what it is, but I know I have something for Monday. Any other day, at all. Now, isn't that provoking? I'm going to the matinee Wednesday, but any—Tuesday? Let me see. Now, how stupid of me! Of course not Tuesday. I'm giving a luncheon—at least it's—you know I don't mean a real luncheon, for of course I should have invited you first of anyone. No one that I really care about—just Japanese napkins and a cup of chocolate and a sandwich—that sort of thing. Now you understand, don't you? I really must run right along; but any day at all, my dear, the week after. Good-bye, you dear thing!

“HE started to propose and then broke down.”
“What did she do?”

“Repaired him on the spot and started him going again.”

A FLORIDA TULIP

CRIMSON cup wherein is blent
 Something of the spice and scent
 Hinting of the Orient,
 You remind me
 Of a garden sweet that lies
 Under other summer skies—
 Of the lips and of the eyes
 Left behind me.

You recall a blossom bower
 Where I found love's magic flower—
 Oh, the gladness of that hour,
 And the sweetness!
 When the East was yellow flame,
 When to kiss me first she came,
 Bringing me the joy we name
 Love's completeness.

So I lift you to my mouth
 In this garden of the South,
 For my lips are parched with drought
 Long unbroken.
 Give me of your stores of bliss
 One remembrance of her kiss,
 All I ask of you is this
 Tulip token.

Let me gently tilt you up
 To my lips once while I sup
 Fragrance from your crimson cup,
 And discover
 Once again the kiss I found,
 Once again the joy that crowned
 Those two lips where sweets abound
 For a lover.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



HOW IT LOOKED

"DEAR JOHN," wrote Mrs. Newlywed from the shore, "I inclose the hotel bill."

"Dear Jane, I inclose cheque," wrote John, "but please don't buy any more hotels at this price—they are robbing you."

THE HIGHER LIFE

By Emery Pottle

SHE had had four weeks of it, Ellen reflected, as she sat in the warm October sunshine that flooded with a morning tide the rusty front porch of the parsonage—four weeks of it. In the beginning it had seemed to Ellen Mather that her life was going to work out here in Fisherville just as she had visualized it in Germany. She had smiled to herself in a briskly congratulatory way at the competence of her own judgment. It was another, though, to be sure, slight, justification of her ability to plan out accurately her own course. After the first few days of Fisherville she had written Rush Webb confidently of her satisfaction.

I felt over there with you in Leipsic that I was quite right in leaving and coming back to America. I had had enough of that life—much as I loved you all. And now I am quite certain of the ultimate wisdom of the decision to return. The book—my book—*our* book—can be written here as well as there. . . . They spoil me here shockingly—and, strange to say, I seem to like it. Oh, no, it is not going to be as you predicted; I shall not suffer from what you are pleased to call “domestic degeneration of the brain”—the reversion to the *ewige Weibliche*. I’ve never felt keener for work.

Those few days had been so restful, so gently amusing, so pleasantly old-fashioned. Ellen Mather had quite forgotten how Fisherville lived—if, indeed, she had ever really known. It is doubtful if she would so have phrased it to herself, but she was not unlike a grown girl playing at a child’s party—tolerantly, with a conscious care of speech and movement.

And then there was her father. He had met her at the station—had she but known it he had gone there a full

hour before train-time and had ambled nervously up and down the wooden stretch of platform, with anxious eyes peering down the long, shining grade, stopping every moment to put his head into the telegraph operator’s window with his delightfully deferential, “Any news of our train, Albert?”

Ellen had a sight of him from the car window, and when he got her in his arms, his eyes wet and his face beautifully radiant, she had felt the rush of a tenderness of spirit she had not known in years. The bystanders fell back, respectful but curious, eager to see what was to be seen.

“It’s Elder Mather’s girl Nellie back from Europe,” they said, with sympathetic interest.

Ellen’s mind ran back over all this as she let the sun soak gratefully into her on this particular morning. It occurred to her presently that Rush Webb had by this time received her letter. She smiled ruefully, the smile growing into troubled lines as Fritz, her father’s weather-beaten shepherd dog, nosed slobberingly against her.

“Get away, dog. I don’t like you.”

The tangible incident seemed to give point to her thoughts. “I wish they would let me alone; I’m so bored. I can’t stand this endless fussing about me. I’m not used to it—it drives me frantic. Can’t they see that I’m not their kind? I wouldn’t mind them or their town so much if they would stop casting themselves and their concerns at my head. And father doesn’t seem in the least to understand— Oh! May Kingsbury!”

Ellen Mather looked about her with

furtive eyes, seeking escape. "I can't—she's seen me," she sighed.

"Good morning, Nellie," May Kingsbury had a throaty way of saying "Nellie" which set Ellen's teeth on edge. "You don't seem so very busy. My, aren't you afraid of taking cold?"

Ellen nodded good morning. "No," she replied briefly; it sufficed for both questions.

"Well, I ran over in any kind of a way—you can see how this old shirt-waist is split in the back, but, anyway, it's clean—while mother was making a fig cake, to ask you if you didn't want me to stop for you this afternoon."

May Kingsbury was about her own age, Ellen considered as she listened; they were both close to thirty. And she was rather pretty, too, in a thin, colorless, pert fashion.

"Stop—?" Ellen inquired lamely.

"Why, yes! The missionary tea, you know. It's this afternoon at Mrs. Glover's—you haven't forgotten it?"

There was in May Kingsbury's voice the plaintive, childish accent she was wont to make use of when she did not quite dare openly to reproach. Ellen drew her knees up sharply and clasped them with her hands, an attitude she knew irritated her visitor.

"You're very kind, May, but I'm not going."

"Oh! Aren't you? You're not feeling——?"

"I'm perfectly well. I don't see any need of my going to this tea—that's all."

May Kingsbury picked off a leaf or two of the autumn-stained Virginia creeper straggling over the porch. With contemptuous eyes she noted Ellen's attitude and her shabby discolored coat and skirt of brown corduroy. But her voice remained still meek and solicitous.

"They'll be so disappointed—at Mrs. Glover's. They'll want to get acquainted. You know they named the society after your father—and you're the minister's daughter. Oh, I just know Mrs. Glover'll be so disappointed!"

"I presume she can bear it," Ellen said drily.

May took an aggrieved exception. "I'm sure, Nellie, I didn't mean to offend you. Of course, everyone has a right to do——"

Ellen Mather rose in exasperation. "I'm not offended, as you call it. I——"

Mr. Mather came tapping up the walk at the moment. May Kingsbury turned to him with a suffusion of affection.

"Good morning, Mr. Mather. How do you do today? You're not tiring yourself, are you? But now that Nellie has come you're so well looked after that mother and I are just lonesome without a chance to do things for you."

May eyed Ellen sharply to see the effect of her speech.

"Your mother and yourself are blessed people," replied Mr. Mather, with bland gentleness, allowing May to help him to a chair and to slip Ellen's cushion behind his back. "What, pray, should I have done all these years without you—while my little girl was away?"

"I must be going; mother will worry," the girl continued artlessly. "I just ran over to see if Nellie would go with me to the Mather tea this afternoon."

"Very thoughtful of you, my dear. And she'll be so glad to go with you—eh, daughter?"

"I'm not going this afternoon, father," answered Ellen quickly.

Her father smiled indulgently.

"My dear, my dear, what will poor Mrs. Glover think? I told her only yesterday you'd be sure to be there—she's so anxious to hear about your life in Germany, too. And besides that she has a beautiful plan to talk over with you. Her class in Sunday-school is getting so small that she's going to give it up and she and several others so very much want you to take charge of this little group and teach them, you know. The Minor Prophets, dear, they have so wanted to study—a wonderful subject. And now you've

had a good rest, I told her I was quite sure you would be delighted to do it. They need young blood in the church. So you see, Nellie, you must go today. Come along, May, and stop for my little girl. She's just got out of the habit of going—that's all."

He rubbed his frail old hands happily and gave the full radiance of his smile to the two girls. May ran down the steps hastily, calling back in the affectation of girlishness Ellen so hated:

"There now, Nellie Mather—hear what your father says. I'll be along about three."

Ellen faced her father in an exasperation of resoluteness which changed slowly to a cold acceptance of the exigencies of the moment. He was so pleased with himself and with his management of the situation. The smile lingered boyishly in his smooth-shaven, pink, heavily wrinkled face.

"Your mother, dear, was a wonderful worker in the church," he said reminiscently. "It is such a comfort to me to think you are to take her place."

"But, father," she essayed quickly, "you forget my own work—that——"

He rose to his feet laboriously and patted her cheek, swaying tremulously.

"We are all workers in this vineyard," he continued, dropping unconsciously into the intonations of his sermonizings, "and the Lord's work must always come before our own selfish aims, my dear."

Ellen shrugged her shoulders helplessly. By that touch of professional manner he had sealed her lips for the instant. "I can't make him understand," she thought.

"Do you wish particularly that I should go to this thing this afternoon?" she asked quietly.

"My dear, of course you must go. You'll enjoy it, I'm certain. I want them to know you, too, as I know my little girl."

"Very well," she answered.

When he had gone indoors she sat down again in the potent sunshine. "My God," she said in a sudden flush of resentment, "how long is this thing

going to keep up? What would Rush Webb say to hear that I was going to the Mather missionary tea?"

II

WHEN Ellen Mather had left Germany she had felt herself—not unnaturally—equipped for the fulfilment of the greatest piece of work she had yet done. Indeed, Rush Webb insisted that she had fairly in her grasp the material for as notable an undertaking as any woman of the time could carry through. She had grown to rely on Webb's judgment in the three years that they had been thrown together in Leipsic—to rely on it, that is, as much as she relied on any outer judgment. Ellen Mather was essentially a woman who distrusted life save as she finally poured it through the filter of her brain and set down such formulas for its composition as she personally concluded to be correct. As a result of these somewhat unsentimental calculations she was openly intolerant of formulas which did not correspond with her own.

In Wellesley she had passed, with students and faculty, as one of the cleverest—that was the word—women that had ever gone through the courses of that institution. And it was not strange that her facile superiority there had fostered in her an arrogance of spirit, partly a natural inheritance and partly the perversion of her sense of femininity—a perversion due to years of association with her aunt, a woman as careless of the social conventions, the delicacies of her sex, as she was punctilious in the habits of her brain. Peculiarly a creature of exaltations—though this was scarcely guessed by her associates—Ellen Mather had early fallen into the ways of sharp analysis of her conditions. The upshot of this, it must be confessed, had bred in her an intellectual acerbity, a bitterness, fairly, toward feminine inconsistencies. Added to these was a bodily, as well as a mental, nervousness in her; nervousness which was, in

the end, both a goad to her and to those about her.

In college Ellen's insatiable hunger for what she called the truth of things, her intrepid willingness to explore every topic that bore on human and cosmic relations, led her inevitably into the fields of philosophy and psychology. When her aunt, therefore, after the girl's graduation, suggested Germany and a doctorate in philosophic study Ellen Mather eagerly took the opportunity. So, after a year or two of travel, they came to Leipsic—and then to Rush Webb.

The death of her aunt in Switzerland one summer had, after all, made little difference to Ellen in the matter of continuing her study, or, for that, in the matter of anything else, she was surprised to note. The small annuity left her made it possible for her to go on to the end.

Webb, as a man, was quite as intellectually intolerant as Ellen Mather. He had a swift, strident brain that worked in fierce swoops or lay dormant in moody periods of despondency—a curious product of materialism coupled with a luminous and almost sensational spirituality. The two—the man and the woman—in the sheer exclusion of their mental loneliness, fastened on each other instantly. There was in Ellen the dominant zeal to acquire which so often manifests itself in women, and which she imparted to Webb insistently. For her part, she found in him a mental splendor, a very profligacy, which left her gasping, cold of hands, winged with new thoughts.

It is doubtful if the two could, in the end, be said to have fallen in love; and yet it was as much that as anything else. The whole affair was curiously dispassionate, though, in their eyes, it was compounded of wonderful compelling forces, forces as far removed from the ordinary natural ebullitions of love as the East is from the West.

There had never been any definite desire for marriage on the part of either one. They seemed to prefer to hold their precious and unique relation as one carries a fragile crystal

globe; to uncover it to the light and, as it were, detaching themselves from it, behold its beauty. They loved to uplift it, to adorn it, this relation of theirs; in short, they loved to *talk* of it.

It is quite to be expected that Fisherville played little or no part in all this. Ellen's visits home had been so few after she was sixteen—her aunt, who had educated her, disapproved strongly of Fisherville—that the girl, beyond the recognition of the fact of her father and her home, had, after all, no associations of any domestic value. Questioned, she would have said yes, she loved her father—she wrote to him once a month.

Early in the last year of her stay in Leipsic she and Rush Webb had worked out the theme of her book, and she had been swept with an overwhelming zeal of gathering material and notes. The effort, in the following summer, had left her exhausted physically and mentally. Several causes worked together, among them, it is possible, a slight renaissance of American spirit, to urge her homeward. And so, at last, she had come back to Fisherville.

Tense, then, with the fiber of her high aims and the certainty of a destiny wider, at least, than Fisherville could ever conceive, she found herself after the month or so of her stay at home vexatiously balked at every turn by a chain of petty obligations the very triviality of whose links seemed to make it the more entangling.

The missionary tea at Mrs. Glover's—a function which, had Ellen been gifted with a keener sense of humor, might have furnished an alleviation—only succeeded in adding to the pile of mole-hills. She had come home from it in a cold, sarcastic fury.

"This is the end of it," she stormed. "I refuse to be badgered any longer into taking part in a life I hate, in a religion that means nothing to me, into a situation that continually robs me of my sense of freedom. I shall talk plainly to father about it."

It was, however, quite a month later that she did really present the issue to Edward Mather.

III

THEY were in the "sitting-room," as it was called by Fisherville—a nondescript place definite only in the fact that it was not the "parlor." Mr. Mather read again with mellow appreciation "The Newcomes"; and Mrs. McKnight, the housekeeper, sat well toward the stove, her skirt folded back over her sateen petticoat, and her knees to the warmth, for the nights were growing very cold. She slept fitfully, rousing from time to time with a gruesome choking in her throat and an alarming snap of her neck.

Ellen, rather at the mercy of her nervousness tonight, lay on a couch near to which was drawn a lamp. She was reading, but with no sharp sense of the matter before her. She was conscious continually of her effort of will to hold herself quietly on the couch; to keep her limbs from yielding to the subtle, maddening excitement she could feel gnawing at her nerve-centres. She was in the position, so she assured herself, of a man on a narrow beam over a high place; a sudden misstep, and it would be all over. She asked herself angrily why, why she had got into this state; surely there was nothing in the Fisherville scheme of living so to upset her.

The end of her uneasy introspection was that the life here at home—the life with which her father was so gratefully enveloping her—was not hers. The reflection was, it must be confessed, unwelcome; Ellen so disliked to feel the sense of limitation, the idea that any set of circumstances she had chosen was not of the wisest. She had not, it is true—save, perhaps, in a rather vexing perception of its acknowledged existence—any conception of duty toward others. Her sense of duty had been, up to now, developed only as the sense of a duty toward herself and her ultimate career. To be sure, she recognized the joy her father had—though why she could not see—in the fact of her presence at home. He had told her she had, in a way, completed his life. He used a Biblical expression

involving the phrase, "and all these things shall be added unto you." Naturally she hated to spoil things for her father. But her book——!

That was it, after all. That was everything. The book must be done. Its completion meant recognition; meant a professorship in a great woman's college. She could not write here at home—*could not*, she cried out to herself wildly. They never left her alone; her father was knocking on her door a half-dozen times of a morning with his gentle, "Working hard, Nellie?" "My little girl must rest now." "Come down, dear, Mrs. Kingsbury wants especially to see you." Or if not he, then that dreadful May was knocking affectedly. It seemed to Ellen she should kill May if ever she heard her murmur as she slid into the room, "My, aren't you grand, writing a book!" It was silly of her, but Mrs. McKnight hoarsely begging her to be frank and let her know the truth, did she or did she not like the potatoes boiled, threw her into a nervous passion and spoiled the morning for her.

Mrs. McKnight went to bed. After that Ellen slightly relaxed and lay quieter on the couch. Her father put down his book and turned to her beamingly. It was so much of a comfort to him just to look at her.

"And to think I've really got my little girl back again," he said, with his beatific eyes full on her. Ellen stirred uneasily. "Dear me, dear me, so often I've sat here, reading away at night and wishing you were here. And now here you are." He laughed exultingly. "Seems to me you are a little pale and thin, my child. This wonderful work, as you call it, isn't good for you. I've a great notion of locking up all those old notebooks and papers and turning you out to play. There's May Kingsbury and all the other girls just waiting to know you." He gazed at her with tender reproach.

"Father, I'm afraid you don't understand," said Ellen slowly.

"My dear, my dear," he said, with a

gentle assumption of reproof, "I am an old man and have lived very long. I've seen human nature, Ellen, in all the forms that it has assumed under the good Creator's hands."

Ellen sighed. He made it so hopeless for her when he took this tone.

"I want to say to you, my child—oh, in the gentlest way!—that I have been a little grieved—just a little—that you have not seemed inclined to enter into the Lord's work here in Fisherville. Ah, the harvest, right here, Ellen, truly is great, and the laborers are few." He peered at her earnestly to see the effect of his words. "I'm not going to preach to you."

Ellen sat up abruptly. "Father, I have not spoken of these things to you for the reason that I have felt you would not understand just—just what my position is in the matter." She hastily ran ahead in her thought to see how she might soften her words for him. "But—well, to be frank with you, religion means very little to me. I am sorry, on your account. I am sometimes sorry, too, on my own account. I can't go into this church work, as you call it; it does not interest me, to begin with. And more than that, the creeds and legends and stories it centres about are to me little else than beautiful but inconclusive fabrications."

Edward Mather maintained his admirable calm; his voice, if possible, grew warmer, more enfolding, tenderer.

"I am not shocked, Nellie, though I am so sorry. I have met this before. The heart knoweth its own bitterness of doubt too often. I have comforted and helped to the light many a burdened soul before this. We won't argue it, child, now—some day, later, I think, I can make it all clear to you. I want you to take your mother's Bible and read it; it is full of passages marked by her own hands. Read it and see how great was her faith in the Promise"—his voice trailed off in dreamy, rapt cadences—"the wonderful promises of Him who will not forsake us."

Ellen's emotions commingled chaot-

ically; pity, vexation, regret, awed admiration for his sublime confidence. She sighed; he made himself, poor old man, so impenetrable. She could not argue; and argument was the breath of life to her.

"It is likely that I have read the Bible more thoroughly and painstakingly, perhaps more understandingly, than anyone in Fisherville," she said crisply.

"Search the Scriptures," her father quoted impressively, "'and ye shall find.'"

Ellen laughed. "I'm afraid that's it. I have found."

His eyes clouded at her flippancy. "Daughter," he said gently, "have you found no God?"

"I have found a god of work and of creation, a god—if you like to call it that—of life—the brain," she replied aggressively.

"And they made them a golden calf to worship," Edward Mather answered solemnly.

Ellen shrugged her shoulders at the impossibility of the situation. If he was going to rebutt with Scripture she might as well give up. Of course, she assured herself, she respected her father's opinions.

"Father, let us not go on with this now. We are hopelessly apart. You don't quite understand that I'm a woman grown—not a little, unthinking girl. Please realize that I have worked out my own salvation, my opinions, long and painfully. And I am what I am. I am not the little girl you think me."

"You'll always be my little girl," he answered, his eyes lighting eagerly.

"My work—can't you see, try to see, what it means to me? I am doing a book, as I told you, that ought, when it's done, to give me a name in the world, a position in a college. Surely this is worth while."

"The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal," Mr. Mather put in firmly.

"Yes, yes. But I must do this work. I came home to find a quiet

place, undisturbed leisure, and you all fret me and worry me so. I must be left alone."

She could not see, in her own absorption, how she was hurting him.

He replied a little tremblingly: "But we are so glad to see you. We want to make it home for you, dear. We didn't know we—we were bothering you. You sha'n't be worried any longer; I'll see to it."

The talk had shaken him sadly, but for her sake—he strove so to have her whole mind and her confidence—he put aside his disappointment and asked brightly: "What is, really, this great book my little girl is going to be famous over? I don't think you've ever told me."

His simplicity made Ellen Mather smile. His little girl! Why, sometimes he seemed her little boy.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't understand."

"I've never had the reputation of being a dunce, my dear," he replied testily.

"Well, then, it's a philosophic discussion of the sex instinct—what you call love—its manifestations, its vagaries, the character of children born in the state of wedlock when this instinct of love is dead. Oh, it has a thousand ramifications. It's a tremendous subject. And it's mine, mine to do."

Ellen was curious to see how her father was to take this explanation.

"You—you are going to *write* this?" he asked, his voice a-quiver with astonishment and horror.

"Yes."

"But, my child, but—why, you must not. You can't understand what you are doing. It is—it is most indelicate! A daughter of mine writing a book on such a subject! I can't believe it. You must not, you must not!"

In his outraged delicacy and in his sorrow and wrath he had risen from his chair and stood trembling, indignant, before her.

Ellen was utterly unprepared for such a demonstration. "Must not?" she asked sharply.

He collapsed weakly in his chair, ashamed of his outburst.

"My dear child," he continued compassionately, "I must try to understand you and to make you understand. I think I see it all. Over in Germany—a skeptic land, I know—you've been carried away by false prophets; they robbed you of your faith and stimulated you to efforts which—forgive me, Nellie, if I speak plainly—which are out of woman's sphere, which are, my child, unwomanly. Now I don't want to seem a harsh, unsympathetic old father—you won't think me that, will you?—but as an old and, I feel, a wise man in the things that are good for the soul, I want you to promise me that you will just give up this—this unmaidenly idea of yours and try to find here at home, here in our hearts, my loving heart, the love and happiness which make a woman's life, after all, the noblest thing God has fashioned."

Edward Mather's face, as he gazed at Ellen, beautifully reflected the hopefulness of his heart, his gentle conceit over the strength and reasonableness of his appeal, his unquestioning trust in her acceptance of his wisdom. His assurance radiated from him.

"There, now, we won't talk any more tonight; we'll go to bed. That's settled."

His daughter was smiling. The smile was not filial; it betrayed impatience, intellectual scorn tempered with pity, unyielding superiority. She temporized in her speech, which was, after all, kinder than she herself felt the occasion actually merited.

"I do not know what I can say to make you understand, father; to show you where I am in the matter—you probably have your own opinion as to that. And it's sadly apparent that we do not agree on the desirability of the product. I'm not going to say even what I may think of your attitude toward the case. I hope, at least, that I am fair enough to respect anyone's opinion, especially yours. But you must realize that you are making a great demand on me—to give up my

chance of success, my book, my living, I might almost say my life—if you follow me. Can't you see—you must—that it is too much to ask?"

She paused for a moment of inner gratification at her temperateness.

Edward Mather's bewilderment was not so much over her words as over the existing condition of things these words seemed to clothe. The idea of his daughter questioning that wisdom of his which had sheltered and warmed and judged and comforted Fisherville for years in their births and marriages and misfortunes and deaths. His own daughter! His hands—frail and discolored with brown spots—shook agitatedly as he tried casually to lay hold on some object on the table, just to show his calmness of spirit.

"Is it too much for a father to ask a daughter to give up a project that is unwomanly?" he asked, with a quiet dignity.

"Unwomanly! What is unwomanly?" Ellen followed avidly. "Who has the right to say such work is unwomanly?"

Mather regarded her with sad eyes. "The right of a long experience in reading the hearts of men and women," he said, "gives me my justification. And I am your father."

"It is not—few questions today are—a matter to be settled between father and daughter; it is a thing to be considered as between a man and a woman." She spoke rapidly and with cutting decision. The tone more than the words, perhaps, alienated him; for he seemed now to sense the growing gulf between them.

Mather made another effort, desperately. "Let it be between man and woman, as you say. Is my experience nothing, then? Can't I judge? Am I stupid, Ellen? Ah, I had hoped, believed, that my girl was finding in me a mental peer and a fit companion. Was I mistaken?"

"You make it hard for me, father," she hedged, "when you take it so personally."

"You make it hard for me," he answered simply.

They were silent for a time; Ellen, in the recognition of the futility of the situation, her father in a feverish hope that she would come to her senses.

"Well?" he broke out at last nervously.

"What do you mean?" Ellen asked, weary of the endless turning of the wheel.

Edward Mather came to her and possessed himself of her hands. It was curious that the hands of both trembled.

"My child, my dear child, you are going to tell me that you will give up this book. Come back to my heart, Nellie."

All the superb confidence of him in himself and in his calling as a servant of God pulsated in his voice. For an instant he was strong. The physical contact, her depression and his sudden emotional appeal were not without their effect on Ellen. Almost she wavered. But with the very swerving of her mind she had a glimpse of Rush Webb's face. It seemed to her, in that tottering instant, that she must go to him. She wanted him. She wrenched away her hands.

"Father, you don't know what you're saying—what you're doing. You can't know. All your life has been lived in this Fisherville. Oh, won't you understand? Must I tell you now?"

She grasped the back of a chair to steady herself and stood there—tall, thin, haggard about the eyes, and yet, after all, not without the traces of a fine, intangible, supersensitive attraction of body and feature.

"There is nothing on this earth to make me give up my life and my work—of which this book you despise is but the first foreshadowing. And if this God of yours exists, He must know and respect my decision."

The strain had been too much for the old man. He collapsed weakly into his chair, tears standing in his eyes. Ellen dared not look at him. She hurried on, half ashamed of the dramatic instinct that had dominated a moment ago.

"I'm going away, father. It's best for you and it's necessary for me. We'll never be at one over this. I—I'll tell you my plans later. I— Good night. I'm very sorry; but oh, you don't understand."

She went out quickly without looking back. And for her it was, "Oh, Rush, why aren't you here? You know everything."

Edward Mather sat dully in his chair, gripping its arms with hands that had no strength to grip. His bewilderment was complete.

"I came unto my own and my own received me not," he kept murmuring childishly. Presently he slipped to his knees and began to pray.

IV

It was curious, the effect of going away from home—for her going was inevitable—had on Ellen Mather. The relief was, at first, unutterably blessed. That there was no May Kingsbury was, in itself, fairly healing to her nerves, though Ellen had come to laugh at the mountainous possibilities she had made of May's molehills. The question, however, of her father was one she could not so easily put out of her horizon. Edward Mather had accepted her decision, at the last, with a wonderful meekness of spirit. His daughter knew, as she knew everything, that she was right to go; but the sight of him troubled her. He had never lost the vague perplexity of eyes that she had seen the night they had talked out the situation in the sitting-room. But his gentleness, his solicitude, even his eagerness to excuse her to his town-folk, were finer in their quality than ever. Ellen was conscious of a wish that he had taken it differently. She could more easily have combated opposition, hatred, she thought, than this dreadful acquiescence. It troubled her more than ever to hear the hesitating step outside her door, the uncertain knock, with its inevitable, "Sleeping, dear?"

The matter of the book was mentioned no more between them, though she could read, had she chosen, the appeal in his watering blue eyes. Ellen overheard Mrs. Kingsbury saying to Mrs. McKnight that the elder had "got a blow" of some sort.

"What is the use of explaining anything, ever," Ellen had asked herself irritably, "to the people who can't understand? If only Rush were here—he'd know and he'd help."

So, after all, Ellen went away. She had decided on Boston. And it was a relief. The small, intellectual room in which she lived was comfortable enough, and it had none of the eternally harped-on associations of the Fisherville house.

She settled down steadily and competently to her work on the book, seeing almost no one and rarely going out, save for some slight exercise in the parks. As she proceeded in her writing she gradually became conscious of an underlying dissatisfaction. The scheme that in Germany seemed a living, sentient thing of brain and fiber lost its compelling force. She began insensibly to distrust herself, a new experience for Ellen Mather.

"Am I not big enough for this thing?" she asked herself one day desperately. "I can do it. I must. I was sure in Germany; why am I not sure here? If only Rush—" she broke off her train of thought uncertainly. "I am not well—that must be it," she finished.

There was growing in Ellen Mather a loneliness. She could not—did not, at any rate—recognize it as loneliness. But that was it. Something within her cried out. It was not home she wanted. "I want my power to think and work again," she put it. Days grew into long gray stretches of wanting, always wanting—something. The book suffered, Ellen suffered.

At last the truth came. And it came in a fashion so absurd, so banal, that she almost shuddered. Ellen had been walking restlessly of an evening in one of the city parks; the night was mild, for it was then early spring.

Before her strolled a pair of spring lovers—a girl near Ellen's age and a man with an incessant and not unmusical laugh bending close to her. Ellen watched them absently, wondering vaguely why the girl so complacently let him put his arm about her waist. The air was soft about her and surcharged with the faint presage of spring odors. Suddenly, with his eyes warm and shining—Ellen saw them so in the glare of a chance light—the man kissed his girl; kissed her twice on the lips, and laughed his eager, infectious laugh; laughed again when he turned and caught Ellen's eye, and his companion laughed, too.

Ellen faced about and hurried back to her room. "It's disgusting," she assured herself, all her instincts offended.

And yet that night in the dark of her room she saw again the warm, shining eyes of the man, heard again his eager, infectious laugh. All through the sleepless hours she saw and heard. And at last she knew the truth about herself.

"Oh, I want Rush!" she cried softly; "I want him to come back. I don't seem to care about the philosophy of love, work or anything else except Rush. Rush, Rush, can't you hear? I want you."

V

It was part of it that Rush Webb should cable her a day or two after this that he was sailing for America. Ellen waited for him almost breathless. Her notes and reference books were pushed relentlessly into a corner and dust settled on them. Ellen herself bought a new gown—something gray and soft and springlike—and there was nothing on earth so important as the question whether she should add a pink collar or a green. It was the pink finally, and when she put it on her cheeks seemed to catch the faint flush of it. On the way to the steamer pier she impulsively thrust a bunch of violets into her belt, and smiled at

her state of mind that made the violets possible. Indeed, she continued to smile as she went on, as the girl who had been kissed in the park had smiled.

Ellen Mather was alive today; alive to everything in the world; alive to herself. There was a wonderful, winged joy in her feet, and in her heart a strange, flushing timidity. Almost she wanted not to see Rush, so eager was she to see him. There must be, she felt, something quite upsetting about the fact of Rush when all this week she had so splendidly gone about with the dream of him, all that had been between them, their theories, their letters—they had written endless pallid letters full of the high and fine subtleties of the brain—their love even, seemed set at naught in Ellen's mind, seemed but the forgotten scaffold of a new, completed building. She was not inclined to use the word, but it was available, at least—all that was now between her and Rush Webb was humanized, was vital and vivified. She felt life; and it was too pleasant to need explaining.

So it was, in a way, a new Rush Webb that she greeted when he set foot on the pier—that is, new to Ellen.

In the subsequent periods when talk was possible, between demands of customs officers and getting off in a cab, Webb successfully evaded anything of a personal nature. For his part he did not quite know what he expected of Ellen; but, at least, he was sure it was not this harassing desire of hers to cling—at the time, of course, figuratively—to him; he was conscious, too, of a certain embarrassment when he met her eyes—warm and shining; and he considered her unusual trick of frequent laughter rather amazing. If he had leisure, in the hurry of settlement at the pier, for assigning a cause for this Ellen, it was, in his mind, the associations of Fisherville.

Once in the cab, jolting their sentences out of them, the first thing was: "Tell me about the book, Ellen? What have you done? Now you've

got away from those dreadful people at your home you have done great things."

The chilling assurance of his serious, monotonous voice rather repelled her; and, too, she had a slight sense of resentment at his last sentence. But the instinct of this was over in a flash; she came back to the joy of having Rush beside her—her possession. Ellen leaned forward for a long breath of the sunny, mild morning.

"Oh, the day is so good!" she laughed. "And it is so good to see you, Rush, really see you. The book?"—her voice grew pleasanter with its easygoing note of luxuriousness—"the book? I wonder if I shall ever do it?"

"Ever do it?" He caught her up sharply. "What do you mean? Surely you've not"—Webb gave her a keen, almost contemptuous penetration—"you've not given it up?"

Ellen came back with a start. "Given it up? Oh, no, no, of course not—give up my—our—book? But somehow the spring—the time of year—these days—they've got into me. I can't seem to think. I want only to—Oh, Rush!"—she laughed again, the eager laugh that was beginning to get on his nerves—"The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings."

"The *'ewige Weibliche*," Webb pityingly thought, "is bound to come out. Women are all alike; I knew how it would be."

Aloud he said: "I had expected to find you fairly drowned in your subject. As it is, you seem amazingly—ah—detached from it."

Again her laugh. "Oh, Rush, it's so good to see you!" She put her hand on his arm. "Tell me about yourself," she continued happily.

"I've come over to see about the publication of my book—the one I was beginning when you left."

"And to see me," she interpolated softly.

"Ah, naturally. But I shall go back on the next steamer. I'm frightfully busy, you know."

"Go back—so soon? And leave me?" Ellen said tremulously.

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Webb inwardly. Then coldly: "My work, that's calling me back, you understand." He leaned back in the cab for a moment of expansion and finished largely: "Work to me is everything; the greatest thing in the world."

"Work is wonderful," Ellen asseverated quickly, "but—ah, Rush, there's something else—a greater thing in the world."

Webb regarded her curiously. "Yes?"

She seemed about to answer—her eyes melted and shone as through a beautiful haze—but instead she stared out on the leisurely city.

"I have a wonderful chance," Webb went on presently. "I'm going with another chap to India to study the ways of the Brothers—the Adept Brothers. He knows one—it is a tremendously unusual thing—a most interesting opportunity."

"India!" she murmured. "Ah!"

He continued to talk of this proposed excursion, Ellen listening vaguely, a smile on her face. Finally he ceased to talk, and Ellen seemed not to notice.

"It was what I expected," reflected Webb, eying her furtively. She was new to him, resentfully new, and yet of an old, old quality. "She is like all of them. They can't hold out. If they've brains they're only fugitive brains. A big sustained mental life—ah, what do they know of it? Ellen—well, I thought her different. She isn't. She's horribly like the rest. Great heavens, what if I hadn't found out!"

She heard him talking again. "It is a pity you have given up your book, Ellen."

"Given it up, Rush? What do you mean?" She looked at him nervously.

"You will never finish it," he returned coldly.

"How do you know? How can you know? I shall write it. After all, *not* to write it?"

"You will never write it," he repeated gravely.

There was, at the instant, a kind of terror in her eyes, yet unexpectedly she laughed.

"Oh, I shall write it—some time. Nothing matters just now—except just us two. Stay here; don't go to India; stay here."

Webb by a hasty movement escaped her hand. The cab was pulling up before his hotel. Ellen bent close to him and whispered:

"If you must go back, take me. Together we'll write the book. Rush, Rush, can't you see? It's *you* I want. More than books to write. All I am you have made me. You must take me back with you—your wife."

The indelicacy of it, he told himself, was terrible. He almost visibly shuddered.

For a moment he had an impulse to tell brutally what was in his mind. But his dislike of scenes interfered.

"You're tired and overworked," he said hastily, vastly relieved to be getting out of the cab. "I'm so glad to have seen you. You were more than kind to come to the ship. We must have a long talk—about everything. Good-bye, then, for now."

Ellen gave him her address mechanically. She wanted to hold fast to his hand forever. It slipped away, as everything seemed slipping. The cabman whipped up his horse and bore her homeward. Ellen tried to look back, but she dared not. She knew well enough what she would see if she did look. To her dismay she found tears on her cheeks, though she was laughing a little wildly.

She, too, had come unto her own and her own had received her not. Oddly enough she found herself using some last words her father had said to her as she left him. "I had so hoped, my child, you would need me—a little."

VI

DREAMS die many times before their final passing, only to struggle back again to their pathetically gay flutterings in the house of hope. The days of the ensuing week for Ellen died and lived

again, feverishly or monotonously. Rush Webb did not come. On Saturday—his steamer's sailing day—a note came to her, a note that Ellen, with her dreadful apprehension of everything, had herself written and received twenty times during the week. Webb regretted that his stay had been so collectively and individually crowded, that he had been so consummately confused and oppressed with duties; he really had not seen a loophole of escape to her. And after all, said he, theirs had been so wonderfully a companionship of spirit and brain that meetings and partings hardly entered into their reckoning. What had been between them was infinitely and indestructibly theirs. He, for his part, should cherish it with his possessions not temporal. For the future, of course, there was to him, as he hoped to her, but one real thing—Work. Out of the Ideal, he put it a bit vaguely, we create the Ideal; so therefore they two should go on, he believed, to the perfect heights, always at one in spirit.

Ellen read it with a flat, stale comprehension.

"What it amounts to," she said calmly and deliberately, in the disgust at any poignant emotion that one is wont to feel in the slack-water moments of all suffering, "is that he wishes I'd leave him alone and mind my own business."

And there she compassed the truth of it.

Webb left her broken and battered; he had found her, strange as it was, in the flush of the humanest of life's experiences—in love; and he had left her out of love—at least as out of it as anyone ever gets. With her dream went Ellen's power of work; when she turned reliantly to herself, the self she had known was not there. She looked in helplessly on the empty, desolated place.

"He has taken everything," she sighed.

It was natural that Ellen's thoughts should turn to something she might call real. And out of it all stood forth that one thing—her father, his love;

in the sensitized state of her heart she caught and held the image of him, suffering for her. All that she had borne from Rush Webb he had borne for her. The knowledge was a clear, translucent light, soft in tone, the rare light at evening after a sodden day of rain.

"It seems almost like what they call at home 'experiencing religion,'" she smiled in the luxury of her sadness.

Ellen gathered together the letters her father had written since she had been in Boston, and re-read them in the illumination of her spirit. It was like leaning on a strong arm.

"I never understood before," she breathed gratefully, "what they mean by the love of the father."

When May Kingsbury's letter came to Ellen she was fairly packed and ready to start home; she could smile at it then. It ran:

MY DEAR NELLIE: I don't know what great things you may be doing nor what immortal books you may be writing, and I don't care. If you care more for that Ph.D. on your name than you do for your father, very well. But if you don't, my advice to you is to come home and look after him. He's a feeble old man and can't last long on this earth. If there ever was a saint—but that's not what I started in to say. If you could hear him talking about you and fairly crying for you you'd not be long in making up your mind to let the higher life rest for a while. Come along home, please, and don't think me a meddlesome thing, even if I am.

MAY.

"I don't know what the end of it all is going to be," thought Ellen Mather as the train swung into Fisherville, "and I'm too tired to care. My book is done for. Somewhere I'll find a place. All I want now is my father."

He was the first one she saw on the Fisherville platform.



THE VIOLET

UNTIL my lonely heart I spake:
 "Now that I need her so,
 She from the grave, for love's own sake,
 This hour must hear and know!"

I sought her, in my need, but she
 No sign, no answer gave,
 (And all this love she plighted me
 No deeper than the grave!)

I called to her across life's gloom,
 Each tone and word she taught;
 Through Death's gray walls, from room to room,
 I called, and found her not.

*But one sign, lo! comes back to me—
 The answering grave returns
 One violet, that, breaking free,
 With her old beauty burns!*

ARTHUR STRINGER.

WAITING FOR THE TRAIN

PLACID old lady, reading a book;
 Another, who's fussy, to judge by her look;
 Man with a suit-case, who can't find his train;
 Official on duty, too bored to explain.
 Restless small boy a-squirm like an eel;
 Proud college-widow with eyes that congeal;
 Man from Far West with a flapping felt hat;
 Grandma and basket containing her cat.
 Hunter with dogs going two ways at once;
 Dutchman with bundles, who wheezes and grunts.
 Two colored gentlemen, rigged out to kill;
 Boy with big water-can, coolers to fill.
 Small girl, an immigrant, green shawl on head;
 Nursemaid in picture-hat, purple and red.
 Man with a "phiz" a pirate might wear;
 Girl at a mirror arranging her hair;
 Lady, too stout, munching apples with zest;
 Freshman with bulldog and fancy silk vest;
 Two politicians, both talking too much;
 Sweet, bright-eyed child, with a smile—and a crutch.
 Tall modern beauty, blooming as Hebe—
 "Who in the world," whisper women, "can *she* be?"
 Widow, deep mourning, face marble-white;
 Jovial drummers a-grin with delight.
 Baby in arms, the most recent arrival;
 Octogenarian—latest survival.
 Girl doing sums, and—what is worse—
 I, in a corner, writing this verse.
 Hissing of steampipes, loud clanging gong,
 Rumble of freight cars, bumping along;
 Youth in the news stand, manners blasé—
 "All aboard!" My train!—I run away.

TUDOR JENKS.



EXTINGUISHED

MATRON—Charlie Broun was an old flame of mine.
 ROSEBUD—And what happened?
 "Father put him out."

THE INFERNAL FEMININE

By Maurice Francis Egan

IT is really time that a serious inquiry should be made into the causes of those constant allegations against the motives of various ladies, famous in history, who have moved the world. By history, of course, I mean fiction, which is, after all, history told with the finest power of selection. And we all know that the Cleopatra of Shakespeare and the Mary Stuart of Scott are real persons—while who does know what the Cleopatra and the Mary Stuart of the chroniclers were? Shakespeare's lady of the asp, and the charming queen in "The Abbot," are as real as Becky Sharp and Beatrix Esmond. More than that cannot be said.

That time-worn phrase, "the eternal feminine," if examined in the light of the context in which it generally responds, will be found to read "the infernal feminine." And why? Because the gentlemen who have made history fiction and fiction history prefer to believe that mankind in general is the victim of the evil tendencies of "*le beau sexe*," which the Frenchman puts in the masculine because he firmly believes that the beauty of the female is only a reflection of his. I may be wrong about this; I cannot verify it, but, if it is inaccurate, it may be regarded as an exception to all the other statements I am about to make in this paper.

All men seem, in the abstract, to prefer that the eternal feminine should be infernal. In fact, they seem to take no interest in any lady of the past unless she has a very well-defined past. Is it strange, then, that the makers of literature, who lay the foundations of

history, should always darken their heroine's character just a little, even when the ladies in question acted from motives which, at the worst, might be called diplomatic? The latest commentator, a learned Athenian, tells us—his assertion is, however, disregarded by the classicists, as he writes in modern Greek—that Helen's relations with Paris would have been legalized by the divorce laws of nearly every State in our Union, had the public of her time been more "enlightened." In fact, he assumes that such a legal arrangement was really made, Helen securing her divorce on the ground of desertion, but that Homer obscured the facts in the case and added a wealth of incident merely to make the heroine interesting, for he knew that if his immortal work was to adapt itself to the uses of schools and colleges, it must be made attractive to the male. Experience had taught him that Circe was better remembered in those literary circles in which he chanted—Homer, by the way, was the founder of the lecture system—than Penelope; and, although he did not dare to make any of his heroines quite as bad as those of the late lamented Gustave Flaubert or the lamentable Ibsen, he felt that they would dwell longer in the mind of the readers of his own sex if their white was just tinged a little with purple. Circe, as Herr Professor Wünsterling has proved, in a note to his "Evolution of the Lotos of the Egyptians to the Acanthus of the Greeks," was a moderately respectable person for those times, and she would in these times be considered very respectable. She, finding a crowd of

men on her hands during a long and idle season, allowed them to seek amusement in their own way. Of course, they made beasts of themselves—and then, they went and told. The consequence is, that Circe is much better known than if she had gone on sending her violets and honey and dried figs to the luxurious cities of the neighboring isles. And yet, since her picturesque reputation is fixed, it is, perhaps, doing her no injustice to say that her only claim to recognition is that she practiced the virtue of hospitality somewhat excessively. Pictures have been painted of her. A thousand sonnets have been written about her, and she has become eternal simply because the chronicler of her amiability chose to represent her as infernal! He knew posterity only too well! Homer had learned the secret of making a "best selling" book.

Nobody knows anything very definite about Sappho. It is not recorded that anybody ever knew anything very definite about her. When research has done its work, we observe that she was a hard-working "poetess of passion," no doubt as respectable as those modern "poetesses of passion" whose fervors pay for pianolas and for front pews in the churches of their choice. Probably when she wanted a girdle or a peplum or a fillet proper to the Marcel curls of that time, she sold her lyric, arranged it for the lute—an instrument which, in tone, Professor Wünsterling tells us, was not unlike the bagpipe of Edinburgh and the accordion of Jersey City—and made her modest purchases. It seems that her chaste verses were enjoyed only by the gentlewomen of her time until an indiscreet press-agent with a view to attracting masculine attention began that series of calumnies that have given her the reputation of being one of the most infernal of her sex. She was even accused of suicide when it was known to her intimate friends that her sole desire was to live as comfortably as she could in the pleasant little island of Samos, where her father's estate—

mortgaged, until these dreadful tales were reported about her—was situated. It is hoped that the tales told by press-agents in the year 1905 of our authors and actors may not injure their reputation in the future. There is a chance that posterity may take them more seriously than we do, but that time alone can tell.

There is no more flagrant case of the "*femme incomprise*" and misinterpreted than that of Cleopatra. Tennyson, in "A Dream of Fair Women," puts words in her mouth she could not possibly have uttered—at least, in that metre. Her fine Egyptian ear would not have permitted her to use both the blank verse of Shakespeare and the rhymed endings of Tennyson. She must have spoken one or the other, if she spoke them at all. That, at least, is certain. But what has been made very uncertain by the unjust attempts to make her attractive at the expense of her reputation, are her motives. There was no Egyptian woman known to profane history—for somehow the very appearance of any of the ladies mentioned in this paper seems to make it profane—who was more patriotic than Cleopatra. Does Shakespeare, does Tennyson, does the author of "I'm dying, Egypt, dying!" mention this fact? It is too prosaic. Patriotism in women does not appeal to men. They will tolerate no self-sacrifice in a woman that is not for a man. And, when a woman does make a great sacrifice for her country, they say, "*Cherchez l'homme*." It is the case of Cleopatra.

This queen has been accused of extravagance because she developed the infant industries of her country at the expense of the Romans and other world-devourers. The export of crocodile and alligator skins for commercial purposes was begun through her foresight in having the awning of her barge made of this serviceable texture. She could easily afford to dissolve a fresh-water pearl in home-made wine, to impress posterity, as the orders given by the centurions for alligator cuirasses, mosquito proofed,

covered the cost a thousand times. She was a woman of business, and, if she had not been weak enough to allow love-making during office hours, Egypt might be in a better position to-day.

Love-making was expected of her. Mark Antony could not understand a nature so serenely patriotic as hers. When she found that he yawned as she read to him extracts from the reports of her consuls in her distant provinces, she was surprised and grieved, for she had expected that a Roman general would be able to understand at least the rudiments of commercial economics. This, Shakespeare—purely because he wrote for men, as in his time women seldom went to the theatre—did not see fit to interpret. A queen, whose only motive was the benevolent assimilation of the invaders of her country, has been made to appear as an example of that infernal femininity which the male sex seems to like to contemplate. She was compelled to conceal—as, alas, most high-minded women are!—her intellectual qualities, and to pose a mere coquette. Many a time, behind her great fan of white peacock feathers, she listened to Mark Antony's false quantities—after the fourth beaker of locust juice he invariably forgot his prosody—and calculated with satisfaction that the fad among the Romans for the fresh-water pearls of the Nile would pay the interest on the national debt. Who now gives her credit for this? It is a great shock to our vanity—and the knowledge of the fact may make Cleopatra less popular—but it is a fact that she found the futile, frivolous companionship of Mark Antony so distasteful to her that she preferred the asp to the torture of having to amuse any other Roman by tricks with pearls and the constant visits to her dressmaker which his sojourn would make necessary. The modern young woman, forced by the traditions of conduct which men have invented for her, to improvise small talk to amuse the brutes, will understand with ease the motives for the

conduct of an Egyptian queen who was as patriotic as she was practical.

Nearly all the ladies celebrated by François Villon in his ballades are persons who were not nearly so good as they should have been; Thaïs, for instance, and that agreeable Marguerite, who had a habit of throwing gentlemen that stayed too late in the tower of Nesle into the Seine. The truth is that the board of health of Paris—terribly strict in some things and lax in others—found certain stoppages in the sewer pipes, and thus a nefarious legend grew up about Marguerite, who at once became an object of interest to François Villon. And the worst that can be said about Mademoiselle Thaïs is that she refused to wear tights. It is maddening to find a perfectly explicable incident in a woman's career made to discolor her reputation. And that Villon includes her in his beautiful refrain, "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" is no reparation to a lady who, Herr Dr. Wünsterling asserts, never married because her modesty was so delicate that she could not endure the thought of having her name printed, even in a paid notice, in the daily papers of Athens, from which all those of the other parts of Greece would naturally copy. Calumny went its full length in her case. Because it is asserted by Cleitarchus that Alexander painted the town of Persepolis red, Dryden has actually concluded that she—then the fiancée of the Conqueror—helped to burn the royal palace in that town.

If the truth were known about Aspasia she would probably be dropped, even from the "Imaginary Conversations" of Walter Savage Landor. So much time has gone, and the lies of tradition become so mighty, that the motives and conduct of this extremely kind-hearted woman cannot be clarified. As a self-made woman who arose from the position of stenographer and typewriter to that of counselor and credit clerk to her employer, Pericles, she has obtained no place in history—for history, in the past, was written for men. Now that history is

about to be arranged for women, Aspasia may be recognized for those sterling qualities which enabled her to retain her sanity and still learn all the conjugations and declensions of her native language before the age of fifteen. Besides, Herr Wünsterling, in his chapter on the acanthus leaf in domestic decoration, mentions that Xantippe met Aspasia coming from one of the lectures of Socrates, and, as the rain had suddenly begun, allowed her to walk to the palace of Pericles under her umbrella, or its Grecian equivalent, which was a large species of the acanthus. This proves the respectability of Aspasia. As Herr Wünsterling is always chronologically correct, nothing remains to be said—and the character of Xantippe is well known.

Another proof that the feminine element in history is not valued by men readers—who for centuries were almost the only readers—is the place which the mother of the Gracchi always occupies in the chronicles. Aspasia's name begins a paragraph—poor, maligned wage-earner! Ninon de l'Enclos is certain to have a picture, done from "an old print"; but the mother of the Gracchi is always put in a note or in fine type. Who ever saw a picture of the mother of the Gracchi? Who asks after her? Who makes a play about her? Even in stereopticon views for the Christian Endeavorers—where, at least, virtue like hers ought to have recognition—she does not appear. Why? I suspect the worst. History has failed to make her interesting. There is nothing against her character—she is eternal, but not infernal. She is dimly recalled simply because she pointed to two scrubby boys and remarked to a visitor, "These are my jewels!" The good deeds of a well-spent life are forgotten. She lowered herself before the male creature, and the male creature recalls her in fine print! Is not this a warning to mothers of the future?

There is Louise La Vallière; who thinks of her after she escaped from that spectacular hog of a Louis XIV. and entered the convent? Ah, but

that is another matter, and the veil and the shrouded *grille* made happiness for that poor soul after the glare and false glory of the *œil de bœuf*!

But why is not Madame de Maintenon an object of interest to popular historians? Simply because she was not of that infernal species of whom men represent themselves as the victims. She reformed the king when he had grown tired even of sin, and she wore her life out in trying to make virtue amusing. That she successfully did this for the blasé Louis ought to have given her the first place among all the famous ladies of the time; but romance, from the male point of view, does not surround the good, and veritable history makes Madame de Maintenon uninteresting because she was good.

It is different with Madame de Montespan and Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry. The names of the first two are sure to attract the great mob that buy bogus memoirs. Thousands who do not know a lithograph from an old master show the most vivid interest in these old mistresses.

But Madame du Barry! Why has Madame du Barry such a vogue? She is supposed to be more infernal than the rest when she was only more foolish. And it must be admitted that when the feminine is both very infernal and very foolish, her picture may be indefinitely given away with every cake of soap. Madame du Barry was probably as excusable as a bad training and a vicious social atmosphere could make her. And her death—brought on by her love for her ill-gotten gains—was anything but noble by contrast with many nobler deaths. And still she skips through romances and declaims on the stage until her really vulgar personality is forgotten in the embroideries that hide it.

Among the imperishable types of the infernal feminine are several ladies whom Mr. Swinburne used to acclaim. There was a certain Faustine, who was as infernal as if she had recited "The Blood Drinker's Revenge" all her life. She recalled old Rome and the Luper-

calia, who, according to Dr. Wünsterling, was the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus, and the sibyls and the forum at night, with vampires in the background and vestals being buried in sieves and the expurgated passages in general. She was awfully infernal. And Mr. Swinburne found her so interesting that he introduced her on every occasion with alliterative verse. And sometimes she howled for new sins, but the waiter, not being sure of his tip, would not bring them, and so the poor lady went on bawling about raptures and roses until the electric lights went out and the place was closed up. She was mighty interesting when Plancus was consul, but she could not stand the competition with Nell Gwynn. And so she had to go!

Pepys was a wretched old gossip. He pretended to conceal his cackle in cipher, in order to have heart-to-heart talks with the world. He has said things about Miss Gwynn which Henry VIII. would have resented, even if whispered against his seventh wife, who determined to survive him. Irritating as this was, Henry VIII. would never have stooped to the meanness of Pepys; he sacrifices to his desire for small talk the reputation of a lady who, in her innocence—some might call it ignorance—merely spelt platonic love with a “u.” If a deficient training in the art of spelling is urged in order to prove that Miss Gwynn, who rose from the ranks, attracted a stucco king by her infernal femininity, reason is useless and any reputation is at the mercy of the mere philologist.

The mention of Pepys recalls the treatment of Becky Sharp by the late Mr. Thackeray, who permitted a coarse-minded public to nurse suspicions of that lady’s conduct which a word from him might have dissipated. If Mr. Thackeray expected Lord Steyne to tell the truth, he showed a lack of knowledge of human nature incomprehensible in a man of his experience. That he should have kept silence himself is to this day inexplicable. I shall not judge him, for in the future some curator of his private papers may yet

show that Becky Sharp—it is more precious to call her by her maiden name, since she was so little understood by her husband and the world—was not so interesting as Mr. Thackeray’s ill-considered silence might imply.

“Ah,” cries the Marquise de Créquy, “when a French Lancelot falls in love with Guinevere he gives up his faith in heaven. The Italians and the Spanish are more reasonable!” There are two Marquises de Créquy. It is the fictitious Marquise de Créquy—the more charming and the wittier one—who says this. It is true. To the French Lancelots is due the fervent invention that the infernal feminine is responsible for everything that draws the male from strict rectitude. This deception has threatened but never subdued other nations. The marquise points out that, with each of her fellow-countrymen, a woman is worthy of a place in sentimental annals in proportion to her claim to be infernally feminine. Having discovered her, he proceeds to blame all his declensions on her and endow her with all the qualities that can draw him from reason and sanity. It is her fault. “Oh, *ciel*,” cries a jury of his peers, “he goes to the devil because she is a woman. *Pauvre Jacques!* We weep!”

This will pass perhaps when a deeper knowledge of psychology, gained by constant attendance at the lectures of the Sorbonne, shall convince the heroines of French novels that the infernal quality is not, after all, a permanent quality of attraction, and that the life of virtue they really prefer is, after all, not without staying qualities.

George Eliot’s *Romola* is, of course, a heroine who prejudices the reader against this theory; but what would you have? She is a philosopher.

No lady—it is very necessary to be careful in one’s expressions, as so many descendants of everybody are still alive—ever started more promisingly in the career of infernal femininity than Lucrezia Borgia. She had no redeeming traits. She was most attractive to the elder Dumas

and many other gentlemen of the old school. What has happened? She has turned out well. She never gave her guests cocktails of prussic acid *pour encourager l'appétit* for hemlock soup and entrées with Jamestown weed sauce. She was never even divorced. She took good care of her children, and she would have attended bargain sales on Mondays if she could. It is recorded that she cut the hair of her two little sons with her own scissors, measuring their heads carefully by means of a silver bowl engraved with

the coat-of-arms of her respected husband.

This is enough. If Lucrezia Borgia could not be depended upon to be infernal through all the ages, what woman can? And this proves that the motives of the heroines of history, the men's heroines, have been so misunderstood that when the feminine is infernal it is because she wants to treat the densely stupid male sex according to his prejudices. She stoops, with an apology to Diana, to conquer the animals!



RAIN AND SUN

YESTERDAY it was raining,
The skies seemed dark and low;
And the east wind all-complaining—
But then I did not know!

Today the soft rains patter,
The dear winds sing and blow;
No storm can ever matter,
For now, dear heart, I know!

CHARLES BUXTON GOING.



EXCELLENT PRACTICE

“DO you still keep up your physical exercise since you left the football team?”
“Oh, yes; I contradict my wife occasionally, just to keep in condition.”



A BARGAIN

FATHER (*as he prepares to chastise his son*)—This is going to pain me more than you!

SON—Say, pop, I'll swap pains with you and give you a nickel to boot!

THE TALE OF A STUDIO

By Ethel M. Kelley

A PAINTER and a poetess,
A pianist—all hen—
Once hired a little studio,
And furnished it, and then
Sent out their cards to various
And eligible men.

At last, this was the clever thing
That they had meant to do.
But eligible men, you know,
Are really very few,
And so they came to be “at home”
To all the men they knew.

Within the chafing-dish they fixed
Concoctions strong of curry,
In their capacious punch-bowl mixed
Cold tea and cooking-sherry.
(For where are things to eat and drink
Men gather in a hurry!)

They leapt into such sudden vogue,
That those who “also ran,”
In rival crystal palaces
Ill-naturedly began
Insinuating that they laid
A trap for Everyman.

One must inevitably feel
There was some truth in this,
Though each one of the trio was
A neat, painstaking miss—
Her maiden art did not appeal
To the metropolis.

They wearied of their meager state,
Of sleeping two between
The hangings of a Moorish couch,
Of gloves that were not clean,
Till they were reminiscent of
The strident gasoline.

THE SMART SET

Each had a young ideal or two,
Now decently interred;
The grass was green above them, and
They very rarely stirred;
And always in the studio
Were richer men preferred.

For art is very long, indeed,
And very hard to do;
And love was never known to prove
A sustenance for two.
A husband might prove faithless, but
A bank account is true!

When we have dwelt for quite a while
Within the world, it seems
Not all as beautiful as we
Had seen it in our dreams;
Pathetically we begin
To piece it out with schemes.

Since happiness seemed not to come
A-knocking at their gate,
They felt that they should vouchsafe some
Assistance, slight, to Fate.
(And surely one's declining years
Were better with a mate!)

Now, as they were a clever three,
And very fairly matched,
There'd been something really doing, since
The door was first unlatched,
Though most of it was sentiment,
That had a string attached!

Of incoherent artists they
Soon gathered in a herd—
Musicians sat in rows, and ate
But very rarely stirred;
And poets came and told them tales
Of what they got a word.

But there was only one, forsooth,
Whose income by the week
Was evident. He had a smooth
And Gibson-modeled cheek.
"A god-like man!" (The poetess
Was given to the Greek!)

They found in him a foeman who
Was worthy of their steel.
He knew the female mind, and how
To make to it appeal;
And what was art, and properly,
How it should make you feel!

And reckoning a man to be,
No better than a churl
Who is for hospitality
Indebted to a girl,
He gave them each an elegant
And conscientious whirl.

And so each dreamed her little dream,
And had her hour of pride,
Went bowling down the Avenue,
Her hero by her side;
And on her breast his violets
With purple tassels tied.

One after one their faithful staff
Was given its *congé*;
It cluttered up the studio
So it was sent away,
While in the sunshine of One smile
The girls got in their hay.

He was a man whose place was with
The Upper Half by birth,
But as the great, swift-sandaled gods
Made journeys down to earth,
He sought the *demi-monde* of Art,
And gauged it at its worth.

He loved the little studio,
The gaudy model throne,
The littered desk, the baby grand
Of vague, uncertain tone;
But most of all he doted on
The absent chaperon!

And thus unwittingly did he
Their expectations fan,
And when the lights were out their dreams
Brought visions of the man
To two upon the Moorish couch,
And one on the divan.

Anticipation rioted
Alternate with distress,
And on three pairs of eager lips
Was quivering a "Yes."
(If anybody seemed ahead
It was the poetess.)

But one sad day it came to pass,
Between the puffs of smoke,
He flicked the ash from his cigar
And casually spoke
Of "Miss De Roe, his fiancée"—
And so the bubble broke.

THE SMART SET

This was the final straw, the last
 Intolerable blow.
 For months their stream of finance had
 Been ebbing very low.
 Now drearily they packed their goods
 And stripped the studio.

The pianist went back to Maine,
 To her own native shore;
 The poet to the boarding-place
 Where she had lived before;
 The painter taught the young idea
 To shoot a little more.

There is no moral to my tale.
 There isn't any when
 A painter and a poetess,
 A pianist—all hen—
 Succeeding not at all at first
 Have tried and failed again.



TOO BAD

HE—I only know that I love you.
 SHE—Oh, dear; I thought you knew all about an automobile, too!



IN CHICAGO

“HOW long has Mrs. Van Duzzen been married?”
 “In all, or to Van Duzzen?”



NECESSARY

NODD—What are you putting your boy through a business college for?
 TODD—I'm fitting him for a literary career.

WE SAVE EVELINA MAY

By Elizabeth Jordan

THIS is the story of how we girls at St. Monica's Academy saved our dear classmate, Evelina May Vanderwater, from dire poverty, and of what happened after we did it.

It will be very exciting, with a great many climaxes in it. I have always wanted to write that kind of story, and once I asked Sister Seraphica, who criticizes our essays and teaches us rhetoric, why someone did not write a story that was climax from beginning to end, instead of just working one up to a dramatic finish the way most of them do. Sister Seraphica said something about such a thing not being in accordance with the rules of literary art, whatever that means; but she did not convince me. For somehow, though I am only fourteen years old and perhaps have things yet to learn about literature, I felt 'most sure it could be done. And now I know it can, for here it is. If this doesn't convince Sister Seraphica and the gentle reader, I don't know what will.

It has taught me something, too, about critics. Critics are people who are always thinking you cannot do things because they know they cannot. I hope a great many of them will sink into a reverential silence after they read this story.

There is one climax to begin with. "The goods follow," as Evelina May's father always used to telegraph her when she wrote and asked him for boxes of things.

Mr. Vanderwater was a very rich man indeed, and Evelina May was his only child, so he spoiled her dreadfully. We girls used to feel quite sad about seeing her lovely nature warped,

as real writers would say, but we felt more reconciled and cheerful as time passed; for Evelina May always shared her boxes with us and we saw that she was thus learning beautiful lessons in unselfishness and generosity. Sometimes, after we had all had things from Evelina May's box, there wasn't anything left for her. Then she would telegraph to her father to send more, and he always did, right away; but, of course, Evelina May had to wait till it came, and that taught her patience, too.

All this brings me right straight to another climax, for only last month, just before Christmas, we learned that Evelina May's father would never again send her great boxes of dresses and jams and pickles and cheques for hundreds of dollars, the way he used to do. Evelina May's father had failed! And Evelina May, instead of being the richest girl at St. Monica's Academy and one of the richest girls in America, was now very, very poor and could never again ask her dear father for more money, and perhaps would have to leave school.

The gentle reader may stop here to breathe while I think of what to say next. I guess Sister Seraphica will be surprised when she sees two climaxes as soon as this. I will now continue without calling attention to any more climaxes, but I hope the gentle reader will watch for them and not miss them when they come.

It was Nettie Chapman who first read the dire news about Mr. Vanderwater. We have class talks every week on current events and we are supposed to read between times "all

the news that's fit to print," and discuss it intelligently with Sister Seraphica. So sometimes we read the newspapers very carefully and find out all about the trusts and strikes and how no public official is fit for his great responsibilities; and then again sometimes we forget and just read about the monkey dinners at Newport and the clothes society leaders are wearing. Well do I remember, for instance, the sad, sad morn when Sister Seraphica asked Nettie Chapman what impressed her most in the week's events, and Nettie spoke right up and said it was Mrs. Waldorf's gown at the Charity Ball, because the front breadths were all white silk and the back breadths were all black silk. And Nettie said she had been wondering ever since she read it how people knew whether Mrs. Waldorf was going to the ball or coming away. Sister Seraphica frowned, and no wonder, for it was indeed all too characteristic of our frivolous friend Nettie to fasten her mind on a silly thing like that, and waste the golden hours of her school days trying to think it out, when all the time we are surrounded by the grim mysteries and terrible responsibilities of vital, throbbing human life. That about "vital, throbbing human life" comes from a book Nettie lent me.

However, this particular morning Nettie was really reading the news, and she was perched up in a window-seat in her room, and Emily Paxton and Hope Murray and I were with her. We were all studying—even Hope Murray, for a wonder. Hope is not a studious and thoughtful girl, like the rest of us, but she has a lovely nature and makes the best fudge in school.

The room was very quiet. All of a sudden I heard Nettie gasp, and when I looked at her the paper had fallen into her lap and her hands were trembling, and she was staring at us as if her eyes were coming out of her head. We all jumped up, but before we could speak Nettie gasped out her terrible message.

"Oh, girls," she said, "Evelina May Vanderwater's father has failed!"

Then we rushed for the paper and Emily took it and Hope and I looked over her shoulders, and we saw a great black headline like this going clear across the page:

WILLIAM GEORGE VANDERWATER SENT
TO THE WALL

Under it there were more lines telling how Mr. Vanderwater had tried to "force a corner" in wheat and "the market had fallen on him" and "flattened him out." Hope thought that must be the worst of all, to have him crushed flat, and she wondered if he would die; but the rest of us knew it was only a figure of speech, though, of course, we did not have time just then to point out the dear child's error. We were all dreadfully shocked, but Emily began to look thoughtful right away and I could see that she was thinking hard. It made me feel better, for I knew that if Emily Paxton set her mind to it something would soon happen—which was, indeed, the case, as you will see when you read on.

Nellie and Hope and I began to talk, of course, and Nettie said doubtless Evelina May would have to leave school right off and go to work, and we tried to think what she could do. It was very hard, for Evelina May, though she is indeed the noblest of us all now, owing to the splendid training we gave her in unselfishness, is not gifted as we are, so we could not think how she could earn any money.

I said how lovely it would be if she could go to Mr. Vanderwater and say: "Father, weep no more. See these willing hands. They will work to the bone for you and yours, and you shall miss none of the luxuries to which you have been accustomed. You have borne the heat and burden of the day long enough. 'Tis my turn now." And then she would support him and her mother the rest of their lives. But when I got this far I got anxious, for I couldn't see just how Evelina May *could* support them. Then Hope Murray spoke up and asked if it wouldn't be perfectly beautiful if it turned out that Evelina May had been

saving money all this time and had a big bag of gold hidden away, and could take it to her father and say: "See what I have laid aside for a rainy day. Take it and save your fortune."

Even Emily looked up for a moment when Hope said that, but her face fell again when Nettie groaned and said she knew Evelina May hadn't saved a cent, because Evelina had borrowed two dollars from Ada Thorne that very morning and told Ada she was down to her last penny and must telegraph her father. Then we remembered that Evelina May had given about ten "spreads" within three weeks. They were expensive, too, because she always asked the whole class and let them bring their friends in other classes, too, if they wanted to. Of course they always did want to, so the spreads cost Evelina May a great deal. Thus that bright dream faded, as the poet says—I mean the bright dream about Evelina May having any money saved, and we all sank once more into an awful abyss of black despair.

All this time Emily had kept on thinking and thinking and had not said a word; and none of us disturbed her, because we wanted to save Mr. Vanderwater and Evelina May, and we knew she could do it if anyone could. But pretty soon Emily murmured, with a long sigh:

"We can do nothing for the father, alas! It is Evelina May we must consider now." Then she went on to say that probably Evelina May would have to leave St. Monica's at Christmas, as her bills, like ours, were only paid till then. Emily groaned, she felt so dreadfully, and said: "What shall we do? What shall we do?"

Hope Murray asked if *we* couldn't pay the rest of the bill for the year. She said she was 'most sure her father would give her a hundred dollars toward it, for Hope's father is quite "affluent," whatever that means. But Emily said that would hardly do, because in the first place Evelina May would not take it from us, and in the second place, perhaps we couldn't all get the money. Most of the girls at

St. Monica's are rich, for it is an expensive school, but we haven't very large allowances, as the nuns do not approve of such things. Emily said she was afraid she couldn't contribute as much as she wanted to, for at vacation time she had heard her father say his income could no longer bear the strain of his son's repeated demands. Emily's brother is in the army, and I guess he spends a great deal and perhaps has some bad habits. That made me remember it was all too possible that my father might not have a whole hundred dollars to spare, either. I bowed my head in grief and so did Nettie, for the same reasons.

All this time the nasty little clock in Nettie's room kept ticking off minutes, showing how time was flying. We were afraid Evelina May might come in and weep on our necks, and we would have, alas! no beacon light of hope to point out to her. Just as I was getting discouraged Ada Thorne burst into the room and said had we heard the news, and wasn't it a mercy Evelina May had gone to spend the day with a friend in the town near St. Monica's? Then we all drew long breaths and felt better, because, of course, with Evelina May away we had lots more time to plan her future and decide what she was to do.

The next instant Emily jumped to her feet as if someone had touched a button and she had done the rest, and she clapped her hands and said, "I have it!" and her eyes filled with tears, she was so pleased.

Emily is an emotional girl, but I will add hurriedly that she sheds tears of joy just as quickly over the nice things you do as over the nice things she does. Oft have I observed this when she has been listening to my stories: so you can see she has a noble nature.

Well, of course, we crowded round her and Emily calmed down and got dignified and kind of queenly, the way she does when she is very serious, and began to tell us her plan. She said at any cost we must keep Evelina May at school the rest of the year, and Nettie spoke right up and said the cost would be about four hundred and fifty dol-

lars. She had figured it all out with a pencil on her bureau-cover. Emily went on to say it would not do to offer Evelina May money, even if we had it; we must consider her pride and her self-respect, and we must help her to help herself. Then Emily said very slowly and impressively that she had discovered how it could be done, and that her plan was to have an auction sale of all Evelina May's things that very day. She said we could have the whole school come and buy them, and then give the money to Evelina May when she came back broken-hearted that night. Emily said we could make quite a little party of it in the evening and have a presentation speech when we gave Evelina May the money, and then sit back and watch her gratitude and joy. Then Emily cried again, she was so excited, and a big lump came into my own throat as I thought of poor Evelina May staggering home in the blackness of her terrible grief and getting right into the sunshine of our love and foresight as soon as she reached St. Monica's.

Wasn't the way I put that nice? I wrote it over and over, for somebody says something about condemning those lines that haven't been revised, so I always do.

We went into executive session right away, for there were many things to do, as you can imagine. We decided to go to Evelina May's rooms first—she has two, a little sitting-room and a bedroom—and to examine all her things and make lists of them, and select those that would sell the best. There are more than four hundred quite grown-up girls at St. Monica's—between ten and seventeen, I mean—and Emily pointed out that if each one bought something for a dollar Evelina May could stay at school. But of course we knew a great many would buy more than that, and Emily added that perhaps there would be enough left to help Mr. Vanderwater, too.

Well, we all trooped into Evelina May's rooms and, as I am a literary artist and strive to write about things as they are, I will admit right here that

it was fun going through Evelina May's things. She had such lots and lots, and they were so pretty. A great many of them we hadn't even seen, for Evelina May had so many dresses she couldn't possibly wear them all. It took a great deal of time to examine everything, especially as we kept trying on gowns and jackets to see if they would fit if we wanted to buy them for ourselves. We were very, very sad when we began, but we cheered up a lot; for of course, as Nettie pointed out, there wasn't so much to be sad about now we knew that Evelina May was to be saved.

Finally we got through and made lists of everything in a very business-like way. Emily made us do that. I am afraid we might not have thought of it. Then we wrote a big card like this:

PRIVATE AND EXTRAORDINARY SALE

A SALE OF CLOTHES, JEWELRY, BRIC-À-BRAC AND FURNITURE WILL BE HELD THIS AFTERNOON IN ROOM 206, IN BEHALF OF EVELINA MAY VANDERWATER, BECAUSE HER FATHER HAS FAILED. IT WILL BEGIN AT FOUR O'CLOCK AND LAST ONE HOUR. COME ONE, COME ALL, AND BRING ALL YOUR MONEY! THIS SALE IS FOR A NOBLE PURPOSE

Of course we had not time to write out many of these, but we made half a dozen and then we went out to show them to all the girls in school and explain our plan. It was a holiday, which shows how in every way Providence seemed to have tempered the wind to poor Evelina May. If it hadn't been a holiday we wouldn't have had time to do all this for her. Who, in the presence of such proof, could deny that the undevout astronomer is mad! We have that sentence in our rhetoric.

Well, most of the girls had heard the news about Evelina May's father, and they were interested in the sale, of course. They came running right off to buy things, but we had to send them away, for we were not ready. We were going to auction everything off, and

Emily had to write out a little speech and learn it by heart. It was very sad. I cried quarts over it, I guess, and so did Emily. As soon as I heard it—Emily tried it on me first—I made up my mind to spend every cent I had, and I went right back to my room and got the five dollars I had left in my drawer. I had thought I might need it, and I guess I would have, too, had things—but we anticipate, as real writers say.

At four the girls came trooping back, with their hands full of money. They had to come quietly, of course, and we had to have sales in all our rooms as well as in Evelina May's, on account of the crowd. So Emily took charge of the clothes, and I said I'd sell Evelina's jewelry in my room, and Nettie took all her underwear.

Of course we didn't let the Sisters know a thing about it—not that we blushed for our noble act, but because grown-ups are so queer they don't always seem to know when acts *are* noble! And we had not time to waste explaining things to adult minds. When we are together we catch things like a flash, but when we talk to the Sisters we have to explain and explain, and often they don't see even then. Besides, they 'most always want to waste our time explaining things themselves. So, as I said before, we just didn't tell them anything about it.

All this time I've left those poor girls, with their money, waiting to buy Evelina May's things. That was rude of me, but I have discovered much since I began to practice writing stories, and one thing is that it is dreadfully hard to keep to the point. You think of other things and then of others, and you ramble on and on—Why, once when I was a mere beginner, 'most six months ago, I began to write a story about a classmate who died of brain fever—not one of us has dared to study much since then—and when I got through the story was all about the "Lover's Leap" rock that hangs over our river, and the Indian maiden who jumped from it and perished on a cold, starlight night. Poor Fannie wasn't in the story at all, after the

first few pages. Fannie was the girl who worked so hard and died, and sometimes she sat on the rock to study. I think that was what started me about the rock and the Indian girl; and it was so interesting I couldn't get back to Fannie. What a power is love in this weary world!

Now I've got to read this story all over to find where I was, or *it* will be about Zulieka, too. Zulieka was the beautiful Indian maiden. I don't know how to return to Evelina May in any subtle way, as Henry James would, so I'll just return.

The girls were all there at four o'clock, with every cent of their money, and the sale began. Emily came to each room and made her little speech, and it was so impressive and touching that when she stopped most of the girls wanted to leave their money for Evelina May and go away without anything. But Emily showed them that would not be businesslike, so they calmed down and began to try on hats and select the things they liked best. It was lots of fun, and the queerest things happened. The girl Evelina May disliked the most of all those at school bought her very nicest Paris hat—and got it for three dollars, too. For when the girls really grew interested, of course they wanted to make their money go as far as it could, so they didn't bid large sums.

None of Evelina May's dresses would fit me, so I bought jewelry and bric-à-brac. I bought a beautiful Russian chain for two dollars and fifty cents, and an emerald ring for five dollars. The prices seemed low, but of course we didn't know what Mr. Vanderwater had paid for the things; and, as Emily pointed out, there are times when a loaf of bread is worth all the jewelry in the world—like when one is stranded on a desert island, you know, with no food, and bags and bags of pearls and yellow gold.

So the girls bought and bought and bought. They would stagger down the halls to their own rooms carrying armfuls of Evelina May's dresses and hats,

and her chairs and pictures and vases, and even her bath-robos and shoes and slippers. I thought we ought to leave some things for her, but Emily said no, we must get all the money we could and Evelina May could wear our things the rest of the year. So the sale went right on. Of course some of the Sisters met us in the halls carrying things, but we are always borrowing each other's furniture for "spreads," so I guess they thought it was something of that kind.

By six o'clock everything was sold and Evelina May's rooms looked like the study-halls the morning after a holiday. Isn't that a clever way of saying there was nothing in them? I am always so glad when I think of things like that, which lend such charm to literary style.

We left Evelina May her bed and her toothbrush, but that was all. She had a polished floor, and her rugs were sold. When we counted up the money we had exactly four hundred and fifty-two dollars and sixty-three cents—enough, you see, to keep Evelina May in school all year, and perhaps help her poor father, too. The girls gave three cheers when Emily announced this glorious result. Then they went off, for I guess they were tired.

After it was over we five—Emily, Nettie, Hope, Ada and I—met in Evelina May's rooms to talk about it. They *did* look queer! Even the curtains were gone, and of course there were no chairs, so three sat on the bed and Emily and I sat on the floor. We were tired, but we were proud and happy, too. Verily, virtue is its own reward.

Suddenly the door opened and Evelina May entered. She had a telegram in her hand, so we saw at once that she must know the terrible truth about her father, but she smiled bravely as we jumped up and rushed to her and put our arms around her and cried. We all cried—we were so tired and happy.

Evelina May just patted our backs and said, "Why, girls, girls—you dear girls." But even as she spoke I saw

her eyes roaming around the empty room, and I could see that she thought she must have blundered into the wrong place by mistake. Then she began to look frightened and queer.

Of course we hadn't meant to have it happen that way at all. We had intended to meet her when she got back, and take her to our own rooms, and make a little speech and give her the money. But the girl who had promised to watch for her and tell us when she came was so busy trying on Evelina May's clothes in her own room that she forgot all about her great responsibility. Sometimes the young are indeed heedless. So that was why Evelina May came right in.

I saw Emily wipe her eyes and begin to act queerly, so I hoped all would yet be well. But even Emily seemed to lose her head, for, instead of leading up to it with a little speech, she picked up all the money—it lay on the bed—and stuffed it into Evelina May's hands and burst out crying again. Then we all joined in, for the artistic nature is emotional, and we all have some of it. I have most of all, so I cried loudest; but just the same I was looking at Evelina May to see what she would do.

What she did was to take Emily by the shoulders and shake her good and hard. She had stopped smiling, and she began to look white and queer about the mouth. She had lots of photographs of her father, and just then she looked exactly like him. Her lips were a straight line and her eyes fairly pierced us. They were as cold as pieces of ice.

"What does this mean?" she said. "What have you done?"

Her voice made me shiver, but I spoke right up. For the very first time it occurred to me that perhaps Evelina May would not like what we had done.

"It is because we love you so much, Evelina May," I said. "And we were sorry your father failed, and we wanted to help you. So we—we sold all your things, and here is the money. Now you won't have to leave school."

It was not an eloquent speech, like the one Emily had ready, but, after all, it had what our history teacher calls "the salient points." Evelina May dropped her hands from Emily's shoulders and staggered back against the wall and dropped all the money on the floor as she did it. No one picked it up. Somehow the surprise for Evelina May was turning out all wrong, and we saw this and cried harder than ever. But the whole time I kept one eye on Evelina May. It is my artistic temperament that makes me so observant. Her eyes kept getting smaller and her forehead got creased, and she stared very slowly around the room. She was taking everything in and thinking hard.

All of a sudden her face cleared, and she smiled again and came toward me with a rush.

"Oh, you dears!" she said. "You dears! I see it all now. You meant to be kind!"

Then she kissed me and I kissed her, and the other girls fell on us in a bunch, and everybody talked at once. Evelina May kept trying to say something, but nobody heard it, for we were all telling her about the auction, and no one could hear anything but her own voice. At last Evelina May backed against the wall again and put her fingers in her ears and shook her head at us; and after she had done that for a while we saw she wanted us to stop talking. We didn't at first, for I guess everyone hoped the others would stop

and let *her* tell the story. But finally I stopped and pushed Emily in front of Evelina May and signed to the others to be quiet, and a great silence fell, as Stevenson says. Then Emily told everything as well as she could, and when she got through Evelina May kissed us all again, and for the first time she cried a little.

"You're just as good as you can be, every blessed one of you," said Evelina May. "And I shall never forget it. But, girls, I've got glorious news. It's all a mistake. Papa hasn't failed at all. Here, read his telegram." And we read it:

Pay no attention to false reports in morning papers. Had a close shave, but your Uncle Jack and others jumped in and helped me, and tonight Vanderwater & Co. are stronger than ever. Give the class a spread to celebrate.

For just a moment we all had that tired feeling the newspapers talk about—the kind you get when you know you've been silly. Emily said faintly that of course we could buy Evelina's things back, but Evelina May only laughed.

"Yes," she said, "I'd like a few of those that have associations. It doesn't matter about the rest. Papa will love to buy more." Then her eyes twinkled in the cutest way and she said, "Let's forget all but the kindness—and let's plan for the 'spread.'"

We did, and we had it, and Emily Paxton spent two days in the infirmary after it. But I won't speak of that, as this story ends so happily.



FAIR LADY MINE

PINK cheeks, red lips, blue eyes, gold hair!
Such is Fair Lady Mine.
Ah, how I love to sing her praise—
At fifty cents per line!

HAROLD MELBOURNE.

AT THE LITTLE GATE

FOR you, dear, coming, on the long, long road,
With little, glad, unwearied heart, knowing not any load;

For you, dear, coming, and dearer every hour,
I have been spending many a wish and wearing many a flower.

The land of the long road is very kind and green,
And there are glad days there and starry nights between.

Gentle thought dwells there and Beauty of the Day.
Ah! how we think of them, with pain, these long years away!

Some vision stays of that lost time—some strain of vanishing song,
Bidding the exile follow and dream, nor count his wandering long,

Though the gray morning move to darkening noon and the empty wind
Gather and sheave the lingering glories, leaving the heart half blind.

Oh, a grave world! A strange world! And you must travel through!
But I am at the Little Gate to watch and wish for you;

And all day long and into the golden, overclouded West
I lean out toward you, coming, sweet and warm, to lie at my breast.

Making my best wish twice and thrice, longing for you to bring
From out that lovely, unremembered land some precious thing—

Faith in the dull, uncertain world, a Heart of Kind Desire,
The Beauty of Willing Feet, Love that will not tire—

Some joyous, perfect, precious thing, lost long ago when I
Had barely left the Little Gate, with all the world to try.

O young, divine, undarkening eyes to shine in the face of care!
O youth of youth! O sweetest love of all loves! May you wear

Always in spite of sorrow and change and toil and the greed of time—
Always the look of your first coming, sweet as an old sweet rhyme.

All day, idly, with heart far off and quiet hand at my knee,
I muse and hope, and love the little child you are to be.

Can you be coming, dear, indeed? The way is hidden and long,
And often I think it is a dream—this wishing and the song!

MILDRED I. McNEAL.

THE GOOD MAN

By Edna Kenton

SHE ached with longing to forgive him, but he had not asked forgiveness, and she could not any longer fling it at his feet unasked. Time and again, in the weary months and years past, she had borne this same ache until it became intolerable, and then, despite his silence, she had flung herself into his arms and sobbed out her pitiful, eager pardons. But time, cruel and relentless, had slowly taught her her mistake. She had persuaded herself that when he knew she would not be unforgiving, he would perhaps, some time, confess that he had been at fault. But she knew by now that he would never pray for pardon, and at last she faced the silences and endured them dumbly. It did not work to any greater peace, but it preserved at least a scant remnant of her self-respect.

All day long she endured the torture helplessly, dimly conscious of an irresistible force at work within her, changing that aching pain into what she did not yet know. She did not eat her luncheon. It was in the dining-room, at breakfast that morning, that this trivial but crucial instance had occurred. She could not think without a shudder of the ultimate necessity for entering that room again. Toward the middle of the afternoon she went down to the kitchen by a roundabout way, because her head had suddenly begun to throb fiercely, and she knew that she must break her fast—a fast which had lasted since dinner of the night before. Food would not pass her quivering lips that morning. It was just as he was lightly sugaring his grape-fruit that he

had turned coolly upon her, and made her day of spring-like joy gray winter.

She took a little wine and a biscuit from the pantry shelves, and then it dawned upon her that her unformed plan of going somewhere—anywhere—for dinner that night must be put aside. She had forgotten, until the heavy solitude of the kitchen smote her, that it was Martha's afternoon and evening out. And Nora had been gone a fortnight already, tending a sick mother. She could not slip off her yoke even for a few hours. She must remain at home to have ready her husband's dinner when he came from his office. He was not a man to whom café living appealed. He liked his home, and he liked it to run on ball-bearings.

She glanced wearily at the clock, and saw that it was already after five. She had supposed it a full hour earlier. She slipped on a white apron that covered her slight figure from head to foot, and peered into the refrigerator. She had waived responsibility of ordering supplies that morning, and Martha had relieved her nobly. She discovered palatable dishes already prepared for cooking, some all ready for serving. Tears which had not wet her eyes at any moment in the day sprang to them now at the evidence of this good girl's thoughtfulness. She so appreciated thoughtfulness, was so grateful for it.

She went about her homely task of dinner-getting. She was a good cook by instinct, and her lack of steady practice did not impair the native ability. She paused once in the midst of things and stared for many minutes

out of the window at the dull red of the setting sun. When she came back to herself at last, she glanced almost fearfully at the clock ticking above her. After that she moved quickly about, for seven, their invariable dinner-hour, was close upon her.

As she placed the bottle of ice water on the table, she heard the click of her husband's latchkey in its lock. She found herself the next moment in the kitchen, her hand pressed hard to her throbbing heart, instead of in the hall, where she had always met him before in spite of everything, anything. She had not planned this departure from custom; she felt herself responsible for nothing tonight. She only knew that her fleet feet had carried her non-resisting body to the spot where her sluggish brain woke to find it.

As the clock struck the hour, she came in with the smoking chops to find her husband just seating himself at the table. She placed the dish before him silently. Her tongue would form no greeting. If her brain had not felt so beaten and torpid, it might have willed her stubborn lips to speech. But she was powerless. She felt herself, for the first time in her active life, a senseless, reasonless automaton.

"Ah!" said Hamline lightly—his words fell into the silence like heavy stones dropped from illimitable space. "That smells good. So you are cook tonight, Janie? I might have telephoned you to come downtown to dinner and for a play, perhaps. We might— Still, once in the house, I'm a lazy dog. Some other time we'll go."

And then it was that Janet Hamline's stunned brain roused to throbbing life.

She sat opposite him, and did her part in serving him. Later she took away his plate and brought in Martha's carefully prepared dessert. She poured his coffee for him, and when he mentioned casually his lack of matches, she rose and brought them for his after-dinner cigar. After a while she rose again, and began to clear away the dinner-table. She heard him rise at last

and go out of the dining-room, and she lingered over her task of dish-washing until she could prolong it no longer—a tiny labor heretofore left for Martha's early morning performing. She could hardly think of the evening that stretched before her, and the night. If only he had had decency enough not to come home to her in that light mood, not to address her in that unendurable manner, as if her morning hurt were mere childish tiffiness, mere womanish sensitiveness; as if he were laughing in cool amusement tonight, instead of sneering at her cruelly as he had done that morning.

Later she realized that it took the whole of that dreadful evening to prepare her for the revelation which came early the next morning, as the clock struck three—after she had lain utterly still and frightfully wide-awake beside her husband for hours, thinking, thinking, with that alert brain which had never ceased its throbbing since it woke to life at his first words of greeting. He had read to her, talked to her, played with her. He had pulled her over to him, and had kissed her cheek, now warm, now cold; had rallied her on her silence, and had laughed good-humoredly at what he termed her feminine fit of stubbornness. Then he had flamed into open ardor before her coldness, ardor tinged with a semi-mockery of himself and of her. To all things she had submitted with seeming lifelessness. She had dutifully bent herself to the demands of his imperious will. But within her was seething revolt, which did not reach white heat until—

It was just as the clock struck three that morning that, in his dead, sound, animal sleep, Deane Hamline's hand went aimlessly out, and fell across his wife's tense body. Janet Hamline uttered no faintest sound, but in the pallid gray of first dawn her face moved as if she had screamed. She did sit upright in the bed, every fiber in her shrinking from the contact that she suddenly knew she loathed. It was in that blinding second that she knew the truth—she hated this man whose wife

she had been for five years. She hated him, hated him! She, his wife!

For a moment she sat, holding her breath in terror, poised for instant spring. She could not see how it was possible for him to be still asleep. And if he were indeed awake—dared to speak to her—she could not answer for the consequences. And she must think, if possible, before she spoke, what it was she should say.

She crept silently away from him at last, flung a robe and some shawls about her, and stole away to a spare bedroom. There were many things for her to think upon, and yet, in the midst of her crowding perplexities, she saw but one road lying before her, paved with naked swords cruelly heated. But to turn back along that other road she had traveled up to now—it could never, never be! Never again!

She sat in a huddled heap, white-faced and staring, until the summer sun crept above the tree-tops and made bright the world. She waited even then, until she heard the swift running of water in Hamline's bathroom, and the vigorous splashing that told of his cold plunge. Then, and not till then, she fled like a frightened thing to their room, and dressed hurriedly. To meet him there, to endure any of the coolly amused, wholly masterful fondling and caressing that she had endured the night before—for the last time, she told herself fiercely—was altogether out of the question. She was dressed and out of their room long before Hamline re-entered it. They did not meet until the breakfast-hour.

"An early riser," he said laughingly. It was clear that he was deliberately cordial. She almost met his cordiality halfway, so relieved was she to find that he had no suspicion of her flight in the night. She had learned to know Deane Hamline well in these five years, and while a certain morally recognized duplicity was not beneath him, he could hardly simulate indifference to anything which seemed to him vital, as such a flight would seem. She even smiled a morning good-bye to him from the steps of his home, as he went

leisurely down the walk, well formed, well groomed, all but portly, and prosperous; an eminently worthy citizen, an honorable moralist.

II

SHE went back into his home and dressed swiftly for the street. She went into his library and, sitting down before his desk, wrote him a brief note, the mere statement that she was going to her mother's home that evening for dinner and for the night.

Then she went back upstairs. She had forgotten a few personal letters, one or two diaries. She gathered them together, her few intimately personal belongings, and put them into a small trunk, which she opened haltingly. It held the baby's dresses and belongings—the little baby, which had not worn one of all its filmy robes, save the finest of them all for its swift burial. She was a woman who tried hard to believe in God and a heaven, and, as she knelt beside that trunk, she found herself thanking that invisible One for His mercy, which she had not known for mercy at the time He took her baby from her yearning arms. As she shut the lid she saw again the beautifully designed letters which she herself had drawn and cut from leather and adorned with loving care: "Baby's Trunk," they spelled. It was foolish—she knew that—the words were all but inane. But the very childishness of it all had so appealed to her while she was doing the fond, foolish work—she had not needed Hamline's light smile to tell her it was all silly and inconsequential—ah, the hurt of that smile!

She had written him that she was going to her mother's for dinner, and she had so telephoned her mother. She had not meant to leave the house so soon. But the opening of that tiny trunk had sickened her, and at nine o'clock in the morning she found herself walking fiercely along her residence street, her slight figure already weary with its rigid tensility of feeling and emotion and her heart too sore to

bear the near presence of any human being that she knew. She had shut that tiny trunk down harshly, had locked it rapidly, had taken away the key. Then she suddenly discovered herself to be out of doors, walking in any direction, going any way which might lead her out of the crushing environment of a crushing life.

She found herself at last in the park, still walking rapidly, still hurrying, hurrying. People seemed everywhere, stupid ants swarming over the earth. In her childhood she had always with her in her dreams a curious vision of the loneliness of the earth when animal life was not, of gray waves washing a gray world, of limitless and colorless expanse stretching out to gray sky. She felt her spirit a part of that primeval world today—if only her body might find such solitude.

She found a solitude at last, far beyond the park, after walking miles. She sank, in fact, almost exhausted upon the solitary sand, with the tossing lake in front of her, so near her that she could almost dabble her hands in the foam of its crestfallen waves, as they lapped the resisting shore-line. The sun was high and the day was hot. She had brought no sunshade with her, and she dragged herself a little further along the shore, until she reached the hot shadow of a polished boulder.

During this space of swift walking she had resolutely held back thought. She had been afraid to think, with the clang of the passing cable-cars in her ears, with the many people passing her so close that they could reach out curious hands and touch her in her obvious misery. And now that solitude was gained, fear still remained, fear of thought.

She had meant to go resolutely through every hour of this last climactic week, to weigh and sift, coolly, calculatingly. But after a half-hour of the solitude she craved, she discovered at last that, lying there with her head against the hard stone that shaded her, and with her tired eyes closed against the brilliant blue of the

lake, she was thinking only of Deane Hamline as the man she had thought he was when he wooed her, six years ago; of her people's genuine delight and gladness over their choice of each other; of those days of betrothal, of early marriage—and there her brain stopped, refused to go further.

For up to now she had been busy with her misery alone, her single standpoint. Now she was thinking of other standpoints, and she shivered with apprehension as she recalled all of the many reasons for their delight and gladness, those dear people of hers. Deane Hamline had money; he had high principles; he had education and culture; he had high standing in his profession and in the city; he was widely known as a model citizen, one interested in clean politics and good morals. And since her marriage to him he had lost none of these things—rather he had added to them, full measure. He still had money, high principles, education and culture, high standing, good citizenship. How could she voice it to them, her determination to leave him, to separate herself from him, let alone her reasons therefor? Who of them might understand her, might sympathize with her? What if she told them, under cross-fire, that her determination was not twenty-four hours old—how could she make them understand that it was not a whim, but her soul's command that she was obeying? How could they understand, since she could not possibly explain it to herself nor to them, save in stubbornly repeated words, few in number, and singularly devoid of carrying force? She discovered herself to be praying for some sign from earth or heaven that might serve her in her task of argument that night with her people, who had rejoiced with her in her love marriage, and had sorrowed with her in what they believed to be its only tragedy, the death of that little baby boy, two years ago.

"It is hard to bear the responsibility of bringing a woman-child into the world to suffer as its mother has

suffered," she said aloud, while the yellow sands rose and fell in the heat of the summer sun. "But I pray that I may never, never bring a man-child into the world to make some woman suffer with every fiber of her soul. I am glad, glad, glad," said Janet Hamline solemnly, "that my only baby died. Glad, glad!"

III

SHE felt all the horror of her people's eyes upon her as she sat facing them that night. They were all in the library, where they always gathered after dinner. Her father was there, and her mother, and her godfather-uncle; her married sister, too, home from the East on a visit. How she had envied Esther her beautiful serenity of mind and heart all through the dinner which had turned to ashes as it passed her lips. All of them had been sympathetic enough with Esther over her marriage, although Carl Russell lacked more than a few of the social traits which Deane Hamline possessed. The two men were too utterly different to be compared with any fairness to either one, yet the weight of favor would always go to Hamline, so obviously successful, upright, honorable and respected.

She had watched Esther's happy face all through the meal. She did not miss a single word of hers to the two little Russells who sat, one on each side of their mother, plying their tiny forks with earnest endeavor to be altogether polite. She had remembered Esther's tender letter to her the week after the baby was born and died—dear Esther! She groped suddenly through silent space after Esther's soul. Might it be that Esther would understand? If Esther could not no one could—she shrank afresh from her confession.

She had waited nervously until Esther had come down from her dear task of putting the two little Russells to bed, had waited until the young

mother told her tenderly merry story of tiny Carl's odd prayer, had waited until a familiar, comfortable silence fell. Then she had cast her bomb, her one short sentence.

She was facing them all as she spoke, and she swept the amazed and horror-filled eyes with her own dark-ringed ones while she waited for speech. There was the dreadful pause, the sudden gasp of realization. The Seymours were a quiet family always, but tonight they spoke together their exclamations of dismay, amazement, concern; all save Esther—Esther, paling and half afraid, but silent, mercifully waiting.

It was her father who spoke connectedly at last, with his eyes bent half sternly upon her, and his voice judicial and commanding.

"Are you suddenly insane, Janet, poor child?" he said. "You say you are going to leave your husband, that you have left him indeed. It sounds unbalanced, my daughter."

"I am not insane," said Janet Hamline. "I have simply reached the limit of endurance. Life with him is not to be borne any longer. I shall never go back to him."

Her mother came over to her quietly.

"Dear, you are speaking at random," she said. "I have never known so perfect a gentleman as Deane. This is just a little passing shadow. No wonder you are taking it so seriously. You have been so singularly free from trouble in your marriage—" She paused, stricken to silence by the curl of her daughter's lips. Then she bent low over her. "He has never treated you brutally, unkindly?"

"Not in any of the ways you mean, mother," said her daughter wearily. "Please don't muss my hair, dearest. I am perfectly normal, perfectly well. No, he has never struck me, never physically abused me—he is not that sort of man, you know."

"What the devil's the matter with him, Janie?" broke out her Uncle Dick fussily. "Never mind us, you

know. If there's a woman in the case, speak up——"

"There could be no disgraceful thing of that sort," said her father in bitter disgust. "Hamline is a decent man. Men do often lead double lives, but I would stake my own home's happiness on his faithfulness to my daughter."

The girl looked about her, into her father's stern eyes, into her mother's shocked ones, at Uncle Dick, nervous and orthodox, at Esther, silent and listening.

"I don't suppose I can make you understand," she said painfully. "No, there's nothing of that sort—I wish there were—it would be easier to overlook—easier to fight against and conquer, and be happy in spite of it. He's unkind to me, unkind!" she burst out.

Her father surveyed her still more sternly. "I don't know, I confess," he said, half bitterly, "what could be harder for a good woman to overlook and to forgive than such a liaison. This seems merely disordered fancy, Janet. You say that he is a gentleman and then that he is unkind—that he does not abuse you, and then that he does. This is a silly whim."

"It is not a whim, father," said Janet pitifully. But her father ignored her.

"He has given you a most beautiful home. He is always buying you jewels and beautiful things—his extravagance along that line has been almost a matter for regret. He has given you servants and horses, beautiful garments, a bountiful table, freedom in your choice of friends. He is generous to excess. Does he ever cause you any sort of annoyance with bills, ever protest any that you make? You have repeatedly affirmed all these good things."

He stopped, while his daughter slowly shook her head.

"A mere senseless whim!" he repeated. "There is no one among the younger lawyers of the city so honored in all ways as Deane, no man with finer prospects for reaching his great

ambitions. He has come unstained from many charges. Only the sanest accusation could ever stand against him. This is some baseless, fleeting misunderstanding, Janet. It will be an easy thing to be friends with him again."

Janet's eyes widened with some inward horror. She struggled for coherent speech. Her mother spoke sharply—she tried to hide her anxiety so.

"Yes, Janet," she said. "And even though he be at fault, it is the woman's place——"

Janet laid her head wearily against the back of her chair, and closed her eyes. She dimly heard some other gentle platitudes delivered in that voice sharpened with worry, and then she heard Esther speak—at last.

"Be still, mother. Can't you see there is something here that we don't know?"

Janet opened her eyes full on Esther's face, serene still, so deep-seated was her peace. Esther's warm hands closed gently over hers.

"It's brave of you to face us all, dearest," she murmured. "Try to talk just to me alone now. Why must you go away from him—leave him?"

"They are all such little things," stammered Janet painfully. "They sound so foolish. I can see him laugh at them, and his laugh always kills speech in my throat."

She caught with sudden passion at Esther's firm, strong hands. "He laughs at me all the time," she whispered huskily. "He sneers exquisitely at almost everything I do and say. He laughs when I tell him what has happened during the day—Esther, I am not like some women who see nothing but detail—there are bits of daily living that some men are interested in—that he might be interested in, if some other woman told him of them, or if I were not his wife. He is stealing away my self-respect, making me begin to think myself what he pretends to think me—a fool. Ah, Esther, you can't understand, with Carl for your husband. Ah, I've heard you tell him

such silly things, and he—yes, he's laughed, too, dearest, when you told them to him, but so differently. It was lovely, the way he laughed at you—he never sneered—that's like red-hot knives, turning, turning, when one's husband sneers."

She stopped for a moment, struggling for a steadied voice. Then she began again, with a swift rush of words:

"I thought—when I knew my baby was coming—that things might be different. I had been beating against the iron of his will for months—ever since the early days of our marriage—Esther, he did not care for the child—he was annoyed—not once in all those months did I have from him a single word or look of sympathy for what I was facing—I went down to meet it as alone as ever woman was in all the world. And when my baby died, he was glad—he never grieved for me for a single second—he was glad. Your letter—the one you wrote to comfort me—it almost killed me, because you quoted what Carl had said to you about that little dead child of yours and his, the first one that came to you—and my husband did not care."

She stopped again, turning Esther's rings round and round. When she raised her head again she faced them all proudly.

"I will never go back to him," she said. "I suppose that I can never make you understand what it means to be the wife of a man who holds women only a space removed from children or minor pets, as mere things created for the amusement and pleasure of men. Nothing special has happened—he has merely sneered once too often. There is no need to tell you the trivial things that provoked the sneer. I have stood the degradation of it for five horrible years, being made light of, and laughed at, and delicately sneered at, until I am growing cowardly, afraid of my opinions, of the very sound of my voice. I am becoming crushed, cowed, spiritless. You will say it is my fault—it is not. He is a type of man so supremely egoistic that no one, man or woman, can ever affect him. I

dare say there are no grounds for legal action, but I shall give him grounds—I shall never enter his home again. I knew it last night when I crept away from him and sat on the floor till morning—that I would leave him today and never go back to him, never so long as I live—never!"

She swept them all with her hard, dry, shining eyes.

"I knew it would be hard to make you understand," she said. "You will understand me still less, I dare say, when I tell you that I could forgive an outraging of faith more easily, could forget drunken beatings of my body more quickly than I can forgive and forget this long, deliberate flagellation of my spirit. I shall never go back to him—never!"

She stopped at last despairingly. What was the use! They had not understood, and the token whereby she might convince them, for which she had prayed that morning, had not been given her. How silly it had been for her to dare to say that merely because he laughed at her constantly, even delicately sneered, she was intending to leave such a home and such a man! How silly it was! She felt it, too, with them all. And yet her resolve, which had so suddenly crystallized after the mighty pressure of years, was at last hard as Hamline's will. At last he had in her a foeman worthy his biting steel.

She was still patting Esther's hand mechanically in the dreadful silence that met her, when she grew rigid suddenly in her chair. There were voices in the hall, footsteps; then the door was pushed open, and Hamline entered.

He came in easily, gracefully, graciously, his greetings those of a man assured of his meed of admiration and esteem. He turned almost immediately to his wife.

"I telephoned the Reveres this afternoon that we would be over for whist tonight," he said. His tone was one of indescribably delicate raillery. He seated himself beside her and took her hand. "Then I went home to find your inscrutable note. They are expecting us tonight. It hardly seemed

worth while to recall my promise. This odd little whim must not matter. We are late, as it is. You would better get on your things without delay."

At last the token—if they could but read! Janet Hamline shrank and quivered at the tone of amused tolerance, of delicately veiled command; at the entire ignoring of her plans and desires; at the hand of steel which for five long years had placed its velvet-gloved fingers on her lips and about her heart. She swept the silent group again with her dry, shining eyes. Then she pressed Esther's hand hard in her despair. No one of the others saw.

She found herself struggling for coherent speech. Violent desires tore at her. Pure fury at him rent her. But her tongue would not form any words. She saw him glance keenly at her, and then about him. She felt a sudden, hysterical desire to laugh—to laugh at him, who, of them all, did not understand the heavy silence. If Esther's voice had not lifted itself just then, she would have been powerless to check her ringing laughter.

"Janet is hardly feeling well tonight, Deane," she heard Esther say serenely. Janet was not looking at her husband, but a sixth sense told her that he was looking at her, tolerantly disbelieving, rock firm.

Then she knew that he turned forthwith to her father, and she listened while the two men discussed briefly a certain phase of the ever present and daily developing traction problem. She knew that her mother was watching her uncertainly; that her Uncle Richard was smoking with mighty energy; that Esther still held her hands.

She sat waiting for five minutes. Then Hamline turned to her.

"Come, Janet," he said briefly.

There was a new note in his voice, amazement rather than added command. Never before had she delayed dutiful obedience to any public behest. Whatever rebellion she had ever shown or voiced had been to him and for him alone. Tonight she merely raised her dark-ringed eyes and looked at him, fresh sense of injustice stirring within

her. She had warned him fairly in that bare, firm note, and he was choosing to ignore it. Before she could speak, her mother's voice broke in:

"She really is not well tonight, Deane. And considering that she had planned to stay all night, perhaps it might be better——"

Janet almost smiled. How well she recognized the hurried, nervous, uncertain note! Never had she heard it before in her mother's voice. But she knew that she herself—humiliation to her soul!—had time and again spoken to Deane Hamline just so.

Hamline was smiling still with his lips. His eyes were like finely tempered steel.

"But we usually talk over such plans together," he said smoothly. "The little hitch lies just here. Come, Janet. We will not stay late, but we will go immediately."

Still Janet sat in silence. She found herself wondering whether it was real bravery, or supreme cowardice, or mere stubbornness; whether she should not, or could not, or would not speak.

Richard Seymour, bachelor, moved nervously. He knocked his cigar ash violently upon the floor.

"Hang it, Deane, sit down," he said. "Can't you see Janie doesn't want to go! Well, cut it out then. She doesn't want to, that's all. She's an individual too, you see."

"Janet," said Hamline harshly—the strain and surprise of it were becoming too much for him—"you are behaving like a child. You are humiliating me—come!" he added suavely, laying his hand upon her shoulder. "We will not go anywhere tonight, save home, immediately. As Esther has said, you are not well—it is the only possible explanation for this little scene. Come, Janet. I shall have a cab sent up, and we will go home."

His wife shivered violently as his hand fell upon her shoulder. She swerved lightly in her chair and shook it off. As it fell again upon her, heavily, she rose and went to her father.

"Is all this so small a thing," she demanded fiercely, "if it happens every

day of a woman's life?—every day, in some form or other, I swear it! Esther sees, and Uncle Dick, and for a moment mother was afraid—you heard it in her voice when she begged for me. No matter what you say, I shall never go back, but it will matter so much what you think."

She waited long. She had almost turned away, white-faced and cold, when her father spoke.

"You are always my daughter," he said slowly, with angry pain. "But be careful."

Janet Hamline caught his hand and held it for a second against her cheek. Then she let it fall and turned about, facing her husband.

"I am perfectly well," she said clearly. "Perfectly well. Understand that. So there must be another explanation for this first public scene of

all our lives. They are leaving us alone, Deane. They all know a part of what I have to tell you. But the greater part is yet to say, between you and me alone."

She glowed and swayed before him, her tongue touched at last with living flames from off the sacrificial altar of her marriage. As he stared at her, angry and amazed, he saw, if not all the truth, this much at least, that she was at last arrayed in deliberate and conscious battle against him. And seeing her thus, for the first time in all their life together, he neither smiled amusedly nor sneered. A certain hatred indeed flared dully up within his eyes, to mock, if it might, her eyes' loathing. But beneath the dully flaring hatred, refusing to be smothered by it, yet hidden from her altogether, lay a sullen, lowering respect.



ONLY A DREAM

SHE—I dreamed last night that you and I were married.

HE—Weren't you glad?

"Awfully—when I woke up!"



LITTLE TO REQUIRE

ETHEL—Don't you think that marriage should be a civil contract?

BEATRICE—Well, I think they should at least be civil until the honeymoon is over.



DIDN'T HAVE TO

WARDEN—Have you anything to say before your electrocution?

GUNBUSTA—No; but I'm so nervous I'm afraid I won't be able to stand the shock.

LOVE IN SILENCE

AS the great sea holds in her dusky heart
 The wealth of native pearls and virgin gold;
 The splendors heaped of galleons untold,
 That lost great London or the Spanish mart,
 And gained the ledges noted of no chart—
 Rubies and opals with their hearts grown cold,
 Spices and oils and ambergris outrolled,
 A deep-sea summer where the great ribs part,

So is my love with silence all enshrined,
 And thou canst never know how in the deep,
 That passion which was never to be won,
 That service which for use was ne'er designed,
 That yearning heart of things unmemoried sleep,
 Hid at the core of bleak oblivion.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.



A SWIFT ONE

“DOES your automobile go by electricity?” asked the inquisitive native.
 “Electricity!” sniffed the impractical but proud owner; “it goes by everything.”



TRUE!

“IF you go any deeper,” said the patient bald-headed man to the mosquito,
 “I’ll smash you.”
 “If you do,” sang the tormentor warningly, “your blood will be on your head.”

LA MORT DU CHIEN

Par Octave Mirbeau

SON maître l'avait appelé Turc. Il était maigre, jaune, triste, de mine basse et de museau pointu, avec de courtes oreilles mal coupées, toujours saignantes, et une queue qui se dressait sur son derrière comme un teigneux point d'interrogation.

L'été, Turc allait aux champs, gardait les vaches, aboyait le long des routes après les voitures et les passants, ce qui lui attirait force coups de pied et force coups de pierre. Sa grande joie, c'était, au milieu d'un chaume, tapissé de trèfle naissant, de lever un lièvre qui détalât devant lui et, à travers haies, douves, ruisseaux et fossés, de le poursuivre en bonds énormes et en courses folles, dont il revenait essoufflé, les flancs sifflants, la langue pendante et ruisselant de sueur.

L'hiver, alors que les bestiaux restaient à l'étable, engourdis sur leur litière chaude, Turc, lui, restait à la niche: un misérable tonneau défoncé et sans paille, au fond duquel, toute la journée, il dormait roulé en boule, ou bien, longuement, se grattait. Il mangeait une maigre et puante pitance, faite de crêton et d'eau sale qu'on lui apportait, le matin, dans une écuelle de grès ébréchée, et chaque fois que quelqu'un qu'il ne connaissait pas pénétrait dans la cour de la ferme, il s'élançait d'un bond, jusqu'au bout de sa chaîne, et montrait les crocs, en grondant.

Il accompagnait aussi son maître dans les foires, quand celui-ci avait un veau à vendre, un cochon à acheter, ou des stations à faire dans les auberges de la ville.

D'ailleurs, résigné, fidèle et malheureux, comme sont les chiens.

II

UNE fois, vers le tard, s'en revenant d'une de ces foires lointaines, avec son maître, arrêté à un cabaret de village, il le perdit. Pendant que le maître buvait des petits verres de trois-six, le chien s'était mis à rôder dans les environs, fouillant avidement les tas d'ordures, pour y déterrer un os ou quelque régal de ce genre. Quand il rentra dans le cabaret, tout honteux de son escapade et les reins prêts déjà aux bourrades, il ne trouva plus que deux paysans à moitié ivres, qui lui étaient tout à fait inconnus et qui le chassèrent à coups de pied. Turc s'en alla.

Le village était bâti sur un carrefour. Six routes y aboutissaient. Laquelle prendre? Le pauvre chien parut d'abord très embarrassé. Il dressa l'oreille, comme pour saisir dans le vent un bruit de pas connu et familier, flaira la terre comme pour y découvrir l'odeur encore chaude d'une piste; puis poussant deux petits soupirs, prestement il partit. Mais bientôt il s'arrêta, inquiet et tout frissonnant. Il marchait maintenant de biais, avec prudence, le nez au ras du sol. Il s'engageait quelques mètres seulement dans les chemins de traverse qui débouchent sur la grande route, grim-pait aux talus, sentait les ivrognes étendus le long des fossés, tournait, virait, revenait sur ses pas, sondait le moindre bouquet d'arbres, la moindre touffe d'ajoncs.

La nuit se faisait; à droite, à gauche de la route, les champs se noyaient d'ombre violette. Comme la lune se levait, montait dans le ciel uni et sans nuages, Turc s'assit sur son derrière, et le col étiré, la tête droite vers le globe astral, longtemps, longtemps il cria au perdu:

— Houou! Houou! Houou!

Il y avait partout un grand silence épandu.

— Houou! Houou! Houou!

Seuls les chiens des fermes voisines répondirent des profondeurs de la nuit aux sanglots du pauvre animal.

La lune montait toujours, éclatante et magique, et l'ombre du chien s'allongeait sur la route blanchâtre.

III

M. BERNARD, notaire, sortait de chez lui, à pointe d'aube et se disposait à faire sa promenade accoutumée. Il était entièrement vêtu de casimir noir, ainsi qu'il convient à un notaire. Mais, comme on se trouvait au plus fort de l'été, M. Bernard avait cru pouvoir égayer sa tenue sévère d'une ombrelle d'alpaga blanc. Tout dormait encore dans la petite ville; à peine si quelques débits de boissons ouvraient leurs portes, si quelques terrassiers, leurs pioches sur l'épaule, se rendaient, d'un pas gourda, à l'ouvrage.

— Toujours matinal, donc, monsieur Bernard! dit l'un d'eux, en saluant avec respect.

M. Bernard allait répondre — car il n'était pas fier — quand il vit venir, du bout de la Promenade, un chien si jaune, si maigre, si triste, si crotté et qui semblait si fatigué, que M. Bernard, instinctivement, se gara contre un platane. Ce chien, c'était Turc, le pauvre, lamentable Turc.

— Oh! oh! se dit M. Bernard, voilà un chien que je ne connais pas! oh! oh!

Dans les petites villes, on connaît tous les chiens, de même qu'on connaît tous les citoyens, et l'apparition d'un chien inconnu est un événement aussi important, aussi troublant que celle d'un étranger.

Le chien passa devant la fontaine qui se dresse au centre de la Promenade, et ne s'arrêta pas.

— Oh! oh! se dit M. Bernard, ce chien, que je ne connais pas, ne s'arrête point à la fontaine. Oh! oh! ce chien est enragé, évidemment enragé...

Tremblant, il se munit d'une grosse pierre. Le chien avançait, trotinant doucement, la tête basse.

— Oh! oh! s'écria M. Bernard, devenu tout pâle, je vois l'écume. Oh! oh! au secours... l'écume!... au secours!

Et se faisant un rempart du platane, il lança la pierre. Mais le chien ne fut pas atteint. Il regarda le notaire de ses yeux doux, rebroussa chemin, et s'éloigna.

IV

EN un instant, la petite ville fut réveillée par cette nouvelle affolante: un chien enragé! Des visages encore bouffis de sommeil apparurent aux fenêtres; des groupes d'hommes en bras de chemise, de femmes en camisole et en bonnet de nuit, se formèrent, animés, sur le pas des portes. Les plus intrépides s'armaient de fourches, de pieux, de bèches, de serpes et de râteaux; le menuisier gesticulait avec son rabot, le boucher avec son coupe-ret; le cordonnier, un petit bossu, au sourire obscène, grand liseur de romans en livraisons, proposait des supplices épouvantables et raffinés.

— Où est-il? où est-il?

Pendant que la petite ville se mettait en état de défense, et que s'exaltaient les courages, M. Bernard avait réveillé le maire et lui conta la terrible histoire:

— Il s'est jeté sur moi, monsieur le maire, la bave aux dents; il a failli me mordre, monsieur le maire! s'écriait M. Bernard, en se tâtant les cuisses, les mollets, le ventre. Oh! oh! j'ai vu bien des chiens enragés dans ma vie, oui, bien des chiens enragés; mais, monsieur le maire, jamais, jamais, je n'en vis de plus enragé, de plus terrible. Oh! oh!

Le maire, très digne, mais, aussi très perplexe, hochait la tête, réfléchissait.

— C'est grave! très grave! murmurerait-il. Mais êtes-vous sûr qu'il soit si enragé que cela?

— Si enragé que cela! s'écria M. Bernard indigné, si vous l'aviez vu, si vous aviez vu l'écume, et les yeux injectés, et les poils hérissés. Ce n'était plus un chien, c'était un tigre, un tigre, un tigre!

Puis, devenant solennel, il regarda le maire bien en face et reprit lentement:

— Ecoutez, il ne s'agit plus de politique, ici, monsieur le maire; il s'agit du salut des habitants, de la protection, du salut... je le répète, des citoyens. Si vous vous dérobez aux responsabilités qui vous incombent, si vous ne prenez pas, à l'instant, un parti énergique, vous le regretterez bientôt, monsieur le maire, c'est moi qui vous le dis, moi, Bernard, notaire!

M. Bernard était le chef de l'opposition radicale et l'ennemi du maire. Celui-ci n'hésita plus et le garde champêtre fut mandé.

V

TURC, réfugié sur la place, où personne n'osait l'approcher, s'était allongé tranquillement. Il grignotait un os de mouton qu'il tenait entre ses deux pattes croisées.

Le garde champêtre, armé d'un fusil que lui confia le maire, et suivi d'un cortège nombreux, s'avança jusqu'à dix pas du chien.

Du balcon de l'hôtel de ville, le maire, qui assistait au spectacle avec M. Bernard, ne put s'empêcher de dire à celui-ci: "Et cependant, il mange!" de la même voix que dut avoir Galilée en prononçant sa phrase célèbre.

— Oui! il mange!... l'horrible animal, le surnois! répondit M. Bernard, et s'adressant au garde champêtre, il commanda:

— N'approche pas, imprudent!

L'heure devint solennelle.

Le garde champêtre, le képi sur l'oreille, les manches de sa chemise retroussées, le visage animé d'une fièvre héroïque, arma son fusil.

— Ne te presse pas! dit une voix.

— Ne le rate pas! dit une autre voix.

— Vise-le à la tête!

— Non, au défaut de l'épaule!

— Attention! fit le garde champêtre qui, sans doute gêné par son képi, l'envoya, d'un geste brusque, rouler derrière lui, dans la poussière. Attention!

Et il ajusta le chien, le pauvre chien, le lamentable chien qui avait délaissé son os, regardait la foule de son œil doux et craintif et ne paraissait pas se douter de ce que tout ce monde voulait de lui. Maintenant un grand silence succédait au tumulte; les femmes se bouchaient les oreilles, pour ne pas entendre la détonation; les hommes clignaient des yeux; on se serrait l'un contre l'autre. Une angoisse étreignait cette foule, dans l'attente de quelque chose d'extraordinaire et d'horrible.

Le garde champêtre ajustait toujours.

Pan! pan!

Et en même temps éclata un cri de douleur déchirant et prolongé, un hurlement qui emplit la ville. Le chien s'était levé. Clopinant sur trois pattes, il fuyait, laissant tomber derrière lui des petites gouttes de sang.

Et pendant que le chien fuyait, fuyait, le garde champêtre, stupéfait, regardait son fusil; la foule, hébétée, regardait le garde champêtre, et le maire, la bouche ouverte, regardait M. Bernard, saisi d'horreur et d'indignation.

VI

TURC a couru toute la journée, dansant affreusement sur ses trois pattes, saignant, s'arrêtant parfois pour lécher sa plaie, repartant, trébuchant; il a couru par les routes, par les champs, par les villages. Mais partout la nouvelle l'a précédé, la terrifiante nouvelle du chien enragé. Ses yeux sont hagards, son poil hérissé; de sa gueule coule une bave pourprée. Et les villages sont en armes, les fermes se hérissent de faux. Partout des

coups de pierre, des coups de bâton, des coups de fusil! Son corps n'est plus qu'une plaie, une plaie horrible de chair vive et hachée qui laisse du sang sur la poussière des chemins, qui rougit l'herbe, qui colore les ruisseaux où il se baigne. Et il fuit, il fuit toujours, et il butte contre les pierres, contre les mottes de terre, contre les touffes d'herbe, poursuivi sans cesse par les cris de mort.

Vers le soir, il entre dans un champ

de blés, de blés hauts et mûrs, dont la brise balance mollement les beaux épis d'or. Les flancs haletants, les membres raidis, il s'affaisse sur un lit de coquelicots, et là, tandis que les perdrix égaillées rappellent, tandis que chante le grillon, au milieu des bruissements de la nature qui s'assoupit, sans pousser une plainte, il meurt, en évoquant l'âme des pauvres chiens,

Qui dorment dans la lune éclatante et magique.



WANTED

"IS she looking for a husband?"

"Yes—the one that deserted her a year ago."



INVISIBLE ACCOMMODATION

PROSPECTIVE BUYER—You advertise fine boating and bathing on the premises, but I don't see a drop of water.

REAL ESTATE AGENT—I haven't shown you the cellar yet.



AN INFERENCE

"UGH, how I hate the sight of those d——d automobiles!"

"Jove, are you as poor as all that?"



TWO KINDS

"A DROWNING man will catch at a straw."

"And so will a thirsty man."

THE DANCE

By Zona Gale

AFTER breakfast one morning Peleas and I were standing at the drawing-room window watching a snowstorm. It was an unassuming storm of little flakes and infrequent gusts, and hardly looked important enough to keep a baby indoors. But we who have old age and rheumatism and heaven knows what to think of, are obliged to forego our walk if so much as a sprinkling-cart passes.

This always makes Peleas cross, and I myself, that morning, was disposed to take exception, and to fail to understand, and to resort to all the ill-bred devices of well-bred people, who are too polite to be openly quarrelsome.

"What a bony horse!" remarked Peleas.

"I don't think so," I said; "its ribs don't show in the least."

"It's bony," reiterated Peleas irritably. "It isn't well fed."

"Perhaps," said I, "that's its type. A good many people would say that a slender woman——"

"*They're* bony, too," went on Peleas decidedly. "I never saw a slender woman yet who looked as if she had enough to eat."

"Peleas!" I cried, aghast at such defection, "think of the women with lovely tapering waists——"

"Bean-poles," said Peleas.

"And sloping shoulders——"

"Yes—pagoda-shaped shoulders," said Peleas.

"And delicate, pointed faces——"

"They look hungry—every one of them—and bony," Peleas dismissed the matter—Peleas who, in saner

moods, commiserates me on my appalling plumpness!

"There's the butter-woman," said I, to change the subject.

"Yes," said Peleas resentfully, finding fresh fuel in this, "Nichola uses four times too much butter in everything."

"Peleas," I rebuked him, "you know how careful she is."

"No, I don't," replied Peleas stubbornly; "she's extravagant in butter."

"She uses a great deal of oil," said I tremulously, not certain whether oil is cheaper.

"Butter, butter—she spreads butter on her soup," stormed Peleas. "I believe she uses butter to boil water——"

Then I laughed. Peleas is never more adorable than when he is cross—at someone else.

At that very moment the boy who was driving the butter-woman's wagon began to whistle. It was a thin, rich little tune—a tune that *pours* slowly, like honey. I am not musical, but I can always tell honey-tunes. At sound of it Peleas's face lighted as if at a prescription of magic.

"Ettare! Ettare!" he cried, "do you hear that tune?"

"Yes," I said breathlessly.

"Do you remember——?"

"No," said I, just as breathlessly.

"It's the Varsovienne," cried Peleas, "that we danced together the night that I met you, Ettare!"

With that Peleas caught me about the waist and hummed the air with all his might and whirled me down the long room more breathless than ever.

"Peleas!" I struggled, "I don't know it. Let me go."

For it has been forty years since I have danced or thought of dancing, and I could not in the least remember the silly step.

Leaving me to regain my breath as best I might, Peleas was off up the room, around chairs and about tables, stepping long and short, turning, retreating, and singing louder and louder.

"You stood over there," he cried, still dancing, "the music had begun, and I was not your partner—but I caught you away before you could say no, and we danced—*tol te tol te tol*—"

Peleas performed with his back to the hall door. It opened softly, and he did not hear. There stood Nichola. I have never before seen that grim old woman look astonished, but at sight of the flying figure of Peleas she seemed ready to run away. It was something to see old Nichola nonplussed. Our old servant is a brave woman, afraid of nothing on earth but an artificial bath-water heater, which she would rather die than light, but the spectacle of Peleas, dancing, seemed actually to frighten her. She stood silent for a full minute—and this in itself was amazing in Nichola, whom I have always feared to take to the theatre, lest she answer back to the player-talk.

In one of the most frantic of his revolutions, Peleas faced the door and saw her. He stopped short as if he had been a toy and someone had ceased drawing the string. He was frightfully abashed, and was therefore never more haughty.

"Nichola," said he, with lifted brows, "we did not ring."

Nichola remained motionless, her little bead eyes, which have not grown old with the rest of her, quite round in contemplation.

"We are busy, Nichola," repeated Peleas, slightly raising his voice.

Then Nichola came to and rolled her eyes naturally.

"Yah!" said she, with a dignity too fine for scorn. "Was it, then, a fire-drill?"

Really, Nichola tyrannizes over us and bullies us about in a manner not

to be borne. We tell each other this every day.

Peleas looked at me rather foolishly for a minute when she had disappeared.

"That was the way it went," said he, ignoring the interruption as one always does when one is nettled: "*Tol te tol te tol*—"

"Why don't you sing *da de da de da*, Peleas?" I inquired, having noticed before that all the world is divided into those who sing *tol*, or *da*, or *la*, or *na*. "I always say '*da*.'"

"I prefer '*tol*,'" said Peleas shortly.

Some time I am going to classify people according to that one peculiarity, and see what so pronounced a characteristic can possibly augur.

"Dear, dear," said I, to restore his good humor, "what a beau you were at that ball, Peleas."

"Nonsense!" said Peleas, trying to conceal his pleasure.

"And how a few of us have kept together since," I went on. "There are Polly Cleatam and Sally Chartres and their husbands, all living near us; and there's Miss Lillieblade, too."

"That's so," said Peleas, "and I suppose they all remember that very night—our night."

"Of course," said I confidently.

Peleas meditated, one hand over his mouth, his elbow on his knee.

"I wonder," he said, "I was thinking—I wouldn't be surprised if—well, why couldn't we——?"

He stopped and looked at me in some suspicion that I knew what he meant.

"Have them all here some evening?" said I daringly.

Peleas nodded.

"And *dance*!" said he, in his most venturesome mood.

"Peleas," I cried, "and all wear our old-fashioned things!"

Peleas smiled at me speechlessly.

The plan grew large in the eyes of both of us even before I remembered the climax of the matter.

"Thursday," I said in a whisper. "Thursday, Peleas, is *Nichola's day out*!"

"Nichola's day out" sounds most

absurd to anyone who has seen our old servant. When she came to us, forty-odd years ago, she had landed but two weeks before from Italy and was a swarthy little beauty in the twenties. She spoke little English and was deliciously amazed at everything, and her Italian friends used to come and take her out once a week, on Thursday. With her black eyes flashing, she would tell me next night, while she dressed me for a ball, of the amazing sights that had been permitted to her. Those were the days when we had many servants, and Nichola was my own maid; then gradually all the rest left and Nichola alone remained—even through one black year when she had not a centime of wages. And so she had grown gray and bent in our service, and had changed in appearance, and lost her graces and her disposition alike. One thing only remained the same—she still had Thursday evenings “out.”

Where in the world she found to go, now, was a favorite subject of speculation with Peleas and me. She had no friends, no one came to see her, she did not mention frequenting any house; she was openly averse to the dark—not afraid, but averse; and her contempt for all places of amusement was second only to her distrust of the cable-cars. Yet every Thursday evening she set forth in her best purple bonnet and black “circular” and was gone until eleven o’clock. Old, lonely, withered woman—where did she go?

Peleas and I used to wonder about it week by week, and now, for the first time, we planned to take a base and harmless advantage of her absence. We meant to give a party—a *dance*—with seven guests. Nichola, we decided, would not have supported the idea for one moment; she would have had a thousand silly objections about my sleeplessness and our digestion and Peleas’s nerves. We argued now that all three objections were inadequate, and that Nichola was made for us, not we for Nichola. This bold innovation of thought alone will show how adventuresome we were become.

We set about our preparation with proper caution. We had a disagreement at the outset, for whereas Peleas was eager to begin by inviting our guests, I was determined first to find out if any one of the old gowns in the garret chests might be worn. I kept Peleas for one whole forenoon in the kitchen, driving Nichola nearly mad with his forced excuses for staying, while I risked my old neck among boxes so long undisturbed that one would have said that they might have dreamed dresses within their empty walls in that long sleep. At last I lifted it from its place—the lustrous white silk that I had worn on the night that I met Peleas. It was as if the fragrance of that time had wrapped it round all these years and kept it fresh. Peleas and I had looked at it together sometimes and had smiled at each other and remembered, but for very long it had lain quite unregarded. The fine lace about the throat was yellowed, and it had caught the odors of the lonely days and nights, but it was no less beautiful in my eyes than the night when I had first worn it.

I hid it away in my closet beneath sober raiment, and went innocently downstairs to release Peleas.

“Dear,” said I, entering the kitchen, “don’t you want to come up and read for a little?”

Nichola looked at me at once, and without a word led me to the looking-glass in the door of the clock.

“Ah?” questioned she suspiciously. “Is it that you have built fires?”

There was a great place of dust on my cheek. I am a blundering criminal and should never be allowed in these choice informalities.

That afternoon, while Nichola was about her marketing, Peleas and I undertook to telephone to our guests. We seldom telephone, and we were both nervous at the idea. We turned on the lights in the hall, and I found the numbers as my share, for—though Peleas claims stoutly that his eyes are as good as mine—I lose no opportunity to prove my superiority of

vision. Then Peleas said something like this to our friends:

"Do you remember the ball at the Selby-Whitfords? Yes—the one forty-nine years ago this winter. Well, Ettare and I are going to give another one to the seven survivors. Yes—a ball. Just we seven. And you must wear something that you might have worn that night. It's going to be Thursday, at eight o'clock, and it's quite a secret. Can you come?"

Could they come! Although the "seven survivors" suggested a steamship disaster, they could have risen to the occasion with no more thanksgiving. At the light that broke over Peleas's face at their answers my old heart throbbed and I pressed my cheek against his coat sleeve in my anxiety to know what was being said. Could they come! Polly Cleatam promised for herself and her husband, although all their grandchildren were their guests that week. Sally Chartres's son, a stout, middle-aged senator, was with her, but she said that she would leave him with his nurse; and Miss "Willy" Lillieblade—she was Wilhelmina—cried out at first that she was a sight with neuralgia and, at second thought, added that she would come anyway, and, if necessary, be buried right from our house.

The hall was dark and silent again when Nichola came toiling home, and there was nothing to tell her, as we thought, what a company of sweet presences had filled the air in her absence. Nor in the three days of our preparation did we leave behind, as we were sure, one scrap or one breath of evidence against us. We worked with the delighted caution of naughty children or escaping convicts. Peleas, who has a most delicate taste in sweets, ordered cakes while he took his afternoon walk, and went back to the shop every day to charge the man not to deliver the things until the evening. My sewing-woman's son plays the violin divinely, and it was easy to engage him, and his sister to accompany him. Meanwhile, I rearranged my old gown, longing for

Nichola, who has genius in more than cookery. To be sure, Peleas did his best to help me, though he knows no more of such matters than the spirits of the air; he can button very well, but to hook is utterly beyond his simple art. However, he attended to everything else. After dark, on Thursday, he smuggled some roses into the house, and though I set the pitcher in my closet, I could smell the flowers distinctly while we were at dinner. It is frightful to have a conscience that can produce not only terrors but fragrances!

We were in a fever of excitement until Nichola got off. While Peleas tidied the drawing-room, I went down and wiped the dishes for her—in itself a matter to excite suspicion—and I broke a cup and was meek enough when Nichola scolded me. Every moment I expected the ice cream to arrive, in which event I believe that I would have tried to prove to Nichola that it was a prescription, and that the cakes were for the poor.

Peleas and I waited fearfully over the drawing-room fire, dreading her appearance at the door to say "good night," for to our minds every chair and fixture was signaling a radiant, "Party! Party!" like a clarion. However, she thrust in her old face, nodded, and safely withdrew, and we heard the street door close. Thereupon we got upstairs at a perilous pace, and I had down the white gown in a twinkling, while Peleas, his dear hands trembling, made ready too.

I hardly looked in the mirror, for the roses had yet to be arranged. I gathered them in my arms, and Peleas followed me down, and as we entered the drawing-room I felt his arm about my waist.

"Ettare!" he said. "Look, Ettare!"

He led me to the great, gilt-framed cheval glass between the windows. I looked—since he was determined to have me.

I remembered her so well—that other I who stood before the glass forty-nine years ago that very month,

dressed for the Selby-Whitford ball. The brown hair of the girl whom I remembered was piled high on her head and fastened with one red rose; the fine lace lay about her pretty throat and fell upon her white arms, and the shining folds of the silk touched and lifted about her, over a petticoat of lawn and lace. And here was the white gown, and here the petticoat and tucker, and my hair, which is quite white, too, was piled high, and held its one rose. The white roses in my arms and in my hair were like ghosts of the red ones that I had carried at that other ball—but I was no ghost! For as I looked at Peleas, and saw his dear face shining, and remembered our long love, I knew suddenly that I am, rather, the happy spirit risen from the dead days when roses were not white—only red.

Peleas bent to kiss me—bent just enough to make me stand on tiptoe as he always does, and then the door-bell rang.

"Peleas," I scolded, "and the roses not arranged!"

"You know that you wanted to," said Peleas shamelessly. And the truth of this did not in the least prevent my contradicting it.

Sally Chartres and Wilfred came first, Sally talking high and fast, as of old. Such a dear little old lady as Sally is—I can hardly write her down "old lady" without a smile at the hyperbole—for though she is more than seventy and is really Madame Sarah Chartres, she knows and I know the cheat—and that she is just Sally all the while.

She threw off her cloak in the middle of the floor, and made a beautiful courtesy, her pearl earrings and neck-lace bobbing and ticking. At sight of her blue gown, ruffled to the waist and laced with black velvet, I threw my arms about her, and we wellnigh laughed and cried together—for we both remembered how, before she was sure that Wilfred loved her, she had spent the night with me after a ball and had sat by the window, night long,

in that very blue frock, weeping on my shoulder because Wilfred had danced so often with Polly Cleatam. And now here was Wilfred looking as if he had had no thought but Sally all his days.

In came Polly Cleatam herself presently, in her old silk poplin trimmed with fringe, and her dimples were as deep as on the day of her elopement. Polly was nineteen when she eloped, on the evening of her debut, with Horace; who was not among the guests—and the sequel is of the sort that should be suppressed, but I must tell it, being a very truthful old woman and having once assisted at an elopement myself: *They are very happy*. Polly is adorable as an old lady—she has been a grandmother for nineteen years, and the offense is Enid's best friend. But whereas Sally and I have no idea of our own age, Polly, since her elopement, has rebounded into a Restraining Influence. That often happens—I think that the severest-looking women whom I know have eloped and come to think better of—everything else. The women who have no little histories like this never look severe. Polly, with an elopement behind her, is invariably the one to say, "Hush," and "I wouldn't."

Miss "Willy" Lillieblade was late. She came in wound in costly furs—heaven provided her bank account in the neuter gender—and she stood revealed in a gorgeous flowered gown—new, but quite like the one that she had worn at the very ball that we were celebrating. Miss Lillieblade is tiny; her hair has turned only a little, and she seems to have taken on none of the graces of age. She has grown old like an India-rubber ball, retaining some of her elasticity and constantly suggesting her former self, instead of becoming another article altogether. She has adopted caps—not soft, black old-lady caps, but perky little French affairs of white. She is a good deal bent, and she walks with a tall, white staff, silver-headed—the head being filled with two kinds of pills, though few know about that.

We were a great contrast, I suspect;

for Miss Lillieblade is become a fairy-godmother-looking old lady; Polly Cleatam has taken on severity and poise and has conquered all obstacles but her dimples; Sally has developed into a *grande dame* of old lace and Roman mosaic pins, and I look for all the world like the plump grandmothers that they paint on calendars.

Peleas and Wilfred and Horace talked us over.

"Boys," said Wilfred, "they don't look a day older than when we were married—and Miss Willy is younger than anybody!"

Wilfred, who used to be slim and bored, is the plumpest, rosiest old gentleman, interested in everything to the point—never beyond!—of curiosity. Oh, these youthful poses of languor and faint surprise—how they exchange themselves, in spite of themselves, for sterling coin!

Horace beamed across at Polly—Horace is a man of affairs, still in active life in Nassau street, and his name is conjured with as the line between his eyes would lead one to suspect; yet his eyes twinkled quite as they used before the line was there.

"Polly," he begged, "may I call you 'Polly' tonight? I've been restricted to 'Penelope,'" he explained, "ever since our Polly was born, and she's forty, and now her husband is condemned to the same practice. I dare say little Polly will rebuke us any day for undue familiarity. May I say 'Polly'?"

Peleas was smiling.

"I leave it to you," he said to everybody, "to say if Ettare's hair was not white at our wedding? She has never looked any other way than the way she looks now."

Miss "Willy" Lillieblade sighed and tapped with her stick.

"Pooh!" said she, "old married people always live in the past. I'm a young thing of seventy-four, and I've learned to live in the present. Let's dance. My neuralgia is coming back."

We had the chairs away in a minute, and Peleas summoned the little musicians from the dining-room—a Danish

lad with a mane of straight, light hair over his eyes, and his equally Danish sister in a collarless loose wool frock. They struck into the Varsoviennne with a will—heaven knows where they had unearthed the music—and at the sound my old heart bounded and, Peleas having taught me the step when Nichola was not looking, I danced away with Horace as if I knew how to do nothing else. Peleas danced with Miss "Willy," who kept her stick in her hand and would tap the floor with it at all the impertinent rests in the music, while Peleas sang "tol" above everything.

Sally insisted upon dancing alone—I suspect because her little feet are almost as trim as when she wore ones. She lifted her blue gown and sailed about among us, and Polly put on her set expression and kept her head prettily on one side for all the world as she used, though her gray curls were bobbing. Wilfred, who suffers frightfully from gout, kept beside her at a famous pace, and his eyes were squinted with the pain. "*Tol te tol te tol!*" insisted Peleas, with Miss "Willy" holding her hand to her neuralgia as she whirled. I looked down at the figures of the carpet gliding under my feet, and for one charmed moment, with the lilt of the music in my blood, I could have sworn that *now was not now, but then!*

This lasted, as you may imagine, somewhat less than three minutes. Breathless and limp, we sank down one by one, though Sally and Peleas outdanced us all, and kept on until we dreaded to think what the morrow held for them both. Miss Lillieblade was down on her knees by the fire, trying to warm her painful cheek on an andiron knob, and laughing happily. Polly, with flushed face and tumbled hair, forgetful of rigidity and poise, was fanning herself with a plaque that had been knocked down. We all knew, for that matter, that we would have to pay—but then we paid anyway. If one *has* to have gout and attendant evils, one might as well make it a fair exchange for innocent pleasure, instead of permitting it to be mere usury! Peleas said that, afterward.

Sally suddenly laughed aloud.

"They think that we have to be helped up and down steps!" she said blithely.

We caught her meaning, and joined in the laugh at the expense of a world that fancied we had had our day.

"If we liked," said Miss Lillieblade, "I have no doubt we could meet here every night, when no one was looking, and be our exact selves of the Selby-Whitford ball."

Horace smiled across at Polly.

"Who would read *them* to sleep with fairy stories?" he demanded.

Polly nodded her gray curls and smiled tenderly.

"And who would get my son, the senator, a drink of water when he cried for it?" demanded Sally gaily.

Peleas and I were silent. The evenings that we spent together in the nursery were so bitterly long ago.

"Ah, well," said Miss Lillieblade, with a little sigh, "I could come, at any rate."

She was silent for a moment.

"Let's dance again!" she cried.

We danced a six-step—those little people could play anything that we asked for—and then we walked through a minuet, to rest, Peleas playing a double role in that. And thereafter we all sat down and shook our heads at the music, and pretended to be most exhausted, and I was glad that the rest pretended, for I was really weak with fatigue, and so was Peleas. For half an hour we sat about the fire, Miss "Willy" with her face usually on the andiron, though she recalled more delightful things than anybody.

"Then there was Aunt Effie, in Vermont," she said, her voice crackling on its high tones, "who went about, when the plain skirts came in, declaring that she never would have one that wasn't full, because she couldn't make a comforter out of it afterward!"

In the laugh that followed Peleas and I slipped out. We were both in an agony of foreboding, for we had not once heard the area bell ring, and if the ices and cakes had been left out-

side it would probably be true that, by now, they *had* gone to the poor.

The back stairway was dark—Nichola always extinguished all the lower lights when she went out. We groped our way down the stairs as best we might, Peleas clasping my hand. We were breathing quickly, and for myself, my knees were trembling. The enormity of our situation for the first time overcame me. What if the ice cream had not come? Or had been stolen? What about plates? And spoons? Where did Nichola keep the best napkins? And, after all, Sally was Madame Sarah Chartres, whose entertainments had been superb. All this flooded my spirit at once, and I clung to Peleas for strength.

"Peleas," I whispered weakly, "did the ice cream man promise to have it here in time?"

"He's had to promise every day since I first ordered it," Peleas assured me cheerfully, "five or six times, in all."

"Oh," said I, as if I had no character, "I feel as if I would faint, Peleas!"

Three steps from the bottom I stood still and caught at his coat. Through the crack over the top of the door I could see a light—in the kitchen! At the same moment an odor—faint, permeating, delicious, unmistakable—saluted us both. It was coffee!

Peleas flung open the door, and we stood transfixed on the lowest step.

The kitchen was brightly lighted, and a hot fire blazed on the hearth. The gas-range was burning, and there a kettle of coffee was playing its fragrant role. Plates, napkins and silver were on the dresser; the ice cream freezer was under the window; and on the table stood the cakes, cut, and flanked by a great tray of thin white sandwiches. And in the rocking-chair before the fire, wearing her best white apron and waiting with closed eyes sat—Nichola!

"Oh, Nichola!" we cried together in awed voices, "Nichola!"

She opened one eye, without so much as lifting her head.

"For the love of heaven!" said she, "I'm glad you've come, at last. The coffee is just ready. Go back upstairs, both of you!"

We went. In the dark of the stairway we clung to each other, filled with amazement and thanksgiving. We could hear Nichola moving briskly about the kitchen, collecting her delicacies. How *had* she found us out?

From above stairs came the laughter of the others—echoes of that ancient ball which we had been pretending to relive—trading that empty past for the largess and beauty of now!

Peleas slipped his arm about me to help me up the stairs.

"Oh, dear heart," I cried suddenly and happily, "I'm so glad that now is now—and not then!"



WHEN GOLDEN-SANDALED SUMMER COMES

WHEN golden-sандаled summer comes
Up from the Southern seas,
God's flowers weave a rainbow thrall,
Earth sings new symphonies.

When golden-sандаled summer comes,
Glad dreams within her eyes,
The woodlands tremble with her songs
Until the long day dies.

Effulgent days of opal rays
And amethystine gleams,
What pleasures lie within your bowers,
What rapture by your streams,
When golden-sандаled summer comes
Up from the Southern seas.

CARRIE E. REWEY.



HEREDITY

MILLEY—You think, then, that the children inherit the chills and fever from their parents?

BALPH—Certainly I do. Their mother was a Boston girl and their father came from Cuba.